

The Nation and The Athenæum

THE NATION. VOL. XXXIV., No. 19.] SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1924.

[THE ATHENÆUM. No. 4893.]

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EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE death of Woodrow Wilson removes one of the world's great figures—in some respects perhaps its greatest figure. Like Lenin, with whom his lot invites a strange but inevitable comparison, he had been so long withdrawn from the activities of life that it is natural to question whether his final departure from the human stage will have any direct political effects at all. There seems, however, some reason to believe it may. While Mr. Wilson lived, even as a crippled invalid in a Washington suburb, he wielded an unmistakable influence on the Democratic Party in America. When the nomination of a Democratic candidate was in question the ex-President had to be considered. He could not dictate a nomination, but he could veto one, and there was never any doubt what his ultimate criterion would be: Any Democrat who failed to line up frankly on the League of Nations issue would come under Mr. Wilson's ban. Now that powerful influence is withdrawn, and the Democrats may hail their freedom with some relief. That possibility is in no way inconsistent with the wave of sorrow, not altogether unmixed with remorse, that has swept over America in the past week. So far as Mr. Wilson personally goes he undoubtedly stands higher in the regard and respect of his country than at any moment since the day he took America into the war. But some of the most reliable Washington writers have sounded a warning against mistaking personal homage for sudden conversion to the ex-President's policy, and there is good reason to believe they may be right.

* * *

J. M. K. writes:—

"Looking back on the Peace Conference, one sees that already from March, 1919, onwards, President Wilson was losing his full powers of mind and will. During the first months of the Conference he at least stood his ground and was fighting bravely. It was after his return to Paris that he became manifestly unequal to the great struggle. In some sentences about the part he played, which I wrote before the breakdown of his health was known, I gave the impressions of one who had seen, at close quarters, the disappointment of the world's hopes through the weakness and ill-judging

mind of an individual. But I did not appreciate then what physical decay was doing to impair the faculty of one who needed the health and strength of ten."

* * *

Everybody in this country—including, we have no doubt, Mr. Lloyd George—will regret that on the day of Mr. Wilson's funeral an interview was published in the "New York World" in which Mr. Lloyd George was represented as charging Mr. Wilson and M. Clemenceau with signing a "secret compact" on the subject of the French occupation of the Rhine areas during his temporary absence from the Paris Conference. The documents on which the allegation is based are soon, apparently, to be published by the French Government, and his own account of the "interview" will no doubt be forthcoming from Mr. Lloyd George. Meanwhile, it is not difficult to piece the story together. M. Tardieu stated long ago in his book "La Paix" that, after interminable discussions, Mr. Wilson finally agreed to the Rhine occupation on April 20th, 1919, and Mr. Lloyd George on April 22nd. It now appears that Mr. Wilson's assent was given in writing. On making this discovery, through some papers submitted to him on January 25th for his assent to their publication, Mr. Lloyd George, who is desperately anxious to prove that he tried to make a good Peace, used the extravagant term "secret compact" regarding it, in conversation with Mr. Harold Spender. That he agreed to the publication of this conversation five days after Mr. Wilson's death we are not willing to believe. There is a certain melancholy significance in the fact that it was during Mr. Lloyd George's flying visit to London to explain to Lord Northcliffe's M.P.s that he was not weakening on reparations that the fight for the Rhine was lost. Apart from that, the "revelation" is of no importance except for its injurious reactions on American and French opinion.

* * *

The Soviet Government has shown no particular haste to acknowledge Mr. MacDonald's Note conveying full *de jure* recognition and inviting Russia to send representatives to London to clear up outstanding differences. There can, however, be little doubt that the acknowledgment, when it does come, will be of a character to

smooth the road to future agreements. These, of course, will be mainly financial, and the Government need take no leading part in them if, as is likely, the Genoa and Hague policy of settlements with individuals in the matter of confiscated property is maintained. The difficulty of proper assessments of compensation is illustrated by the prolonged series of war-damage frauds in Northern France, and there is much to be said for the constitution of competent arbitral tribunals. Mr. MacDonald's action, which has encountered singularly little criticism in this country, is not being followed in France, where, indeed, the Soviet agent has just packed his bags and migrated across the Channel. The Italian negotiations also have hung fire for a reason not clearly explained; while America shows no more sign than she ever did of recognizing the present administration at Moscow. Meanwhile, the British Government's decision to recognize unconditionally has had the rather unexpected effect of complicating its negotiations with Mexico, which now declines to discuss conditions which were considered superfluous in the case of Russia. It does not, of course, follow from any of these facts that the step which has been taken was an unwise one.

To succeed Lenin is not a conspicuously easy task. It has fallen to Alexei Ivanovich Rykov, who has the advantage of being a young man—he is only forty-three—of purely Russian birth and education. The strong feeling that the head of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics should be a Russian and not a Russian Jew, narrowed down the field of choice. Probably it is the best selection that could be made under the circumstances, for Rykov has an excellent record as an administrator, and has for a long time been regarded as one of the best brains in the Communist Party. Moreover, he has the hall-mark of virtue in Russia—he has spent years in prison and in exile for his political faith, and he remained in Russia when others found refuge abroad. For the last five years he has been head of the V.C.N.K. or Economic Council, and has thus been in charge of the direction of industry, which has undoubtedly made a considerable stride towards recovery under his régime. He has the reputation of being a moderate man, and the appointment is to some extent of the nature of a compromise. But it would be a mistake to think that his accession to power means a relaxation of the present economic system. In the recent acrimonious disputes at the Party Conference he has been a stiff defender of the policy of the Party against Trotsky, Pyatakov, and other would-be innovators. If he had not been a strong defender of orthodoxy he would hardly have been appointed to succeed Lenin, since the defeat of Trotsky was a victory for the orthodox; but perhaps the responsibility which he has now shouldered will change his attitude towards some of the questions involved.

The history of Greece for the past nine years—and, indeed, for a good deal further back than that—is largely the history of M. Venizelos's returns and withdrawals. Never did the importance of physical frailties loom larger than at this moment, when the Cretan statesman, pressed again unwillingly into the service of his country, has found his health unequal to the strain and resigned the office of Prime Minister, assumed no more than three weeks ago. Even in the brief period since his return he has had a hard fight against disorder in the Chamber, and his removal at this juncture increases the uncertainty as to the outcome of the fight between Republicans and Royalists. The arrangements for a double plebiscite, on the existence of the monarchy and the personality of the monarch, no doubt hold good, but the presence of M.

Venizelos at Athens was regarded as some sort of guarantee that the vote would be taken under conditions that would make it a free and fair expression of the people's wishes. There can be no such assurance now. And unfortunately for Greece, so long as she remains politically unsettled she will not obtain the external loan she so urgently needs, either for refugee settlement or for any other purpose.

Mr. Wheatley's concessions to the Poplar Board of Guardians are likely to form the subject of the first serious Parliamentary challenge to the new Government. In 1922 the Ministry of Health issued an Order limiting the scale on which the Poplar Guardians could pay outdoor relief. The Poplar Guardians, as their chairman, Mr. Edgar Lansbury, boasts, "have never complied with that Order," and have thus rendered themselves liable to be surcharged personally in respect of excess payments. Mr. Wheatley has signalized his accession to office by announcing that he has decided "to rescind the special Poplar Order and to remit any surcharge that might be made under it." He has also promised to "consider carefully and sympathetically" the remission of other surcharges upon the Poplar Guardians in respect of poor-law relief and the payment of excessive wages to their employees; and he implies that he is only restrained from remitting them immediately by the necessity in the one case of "satisfying himself of the present legal position," and by the fact that the other matter is at the moment *sub judice*. This gesture of Mr. Wheatley has caused widespread perturbation. It is unlikely, perhaps, that it will be the signal for an immediate increase in the scale of relief in Poplar or elsewhere. Mr. Lansbury declares that as Poplar has been paying all the time in excess of the official limit, and has no intention of increasing its present scale, Mr. Wheatley's decision merely legalizes their actual policy. But Poplar's conception of what is "reasonable and adequate" is, as experience shows, an elastic one, and may be expected to expand with the withdrawal of the restraint, which has undoubtedly tended to compress it towards moderation in the past two years. The pressure of unemployed bodies on Boards of Guardians in Poplar and other boroughs is almost certain to be intensified. In any case, it is not a trifling matter to free the Poplar Guardians from the penalties attaching to their deliberate defiance of an Order made expressly to prevent their doing what in fact they did.

It remains to be seen how Mr. Wheatley will attempt to justify his action. The principle of local autonomy, coupled with the fact that the Order now rescinded singled out Poplar for a restraint which was not imposed on other boroughs, will constitute an inadequate defence. The link between voting power and financial responsibility is far too weak under our system of local government to justify uncontrolled local independence on financial matters; while the public interests imperatively require some degree of uniformity both in the administration of poor relief and the burden of rates. It was, indeed, just because the burden of rates had become so high in Poplar and other poor districts that it was found necessary in 1921 to throw the burden of outdoor relief (within the limits of the official scale) upon the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, *i.e.*, upon London as a whole. What Poplar spends cannot, in short, be regarded as a matter with which the rest of us have no concern; the special restraint was imposed upon Poplar precisely because it was necessary there; and its existence has probably not been without moral effect on other Boards of Guardians. It is hard to see

how Mr. Wheatley can defend himself without defending the policy of the Poplar Board, with all its implications. Nothing could be more embarrassing to the Labour Government than to be thus associated officially with "Poplarism" at the outset of its career. For the public instinct is, we think, entirely right in regarding "Poplarism" as a dangerous tendency which, if not firmly controlled, would plunge us into the same kind of economic chaos and demoralization which we experienced a hundred years ago, and which led to the harsh corrective of the "workhouse test."

* * *

The meeting between representatives of the employers and of the dockers last Tuesday can hardly be said to have accomplished much in the way of negotiation, for after hearing the men's case the employers asked for an adjournment in order that they might report to their National Council, which would decide whether negotiations should proceed, and if so on what lines. There will be another joint meeting next Monday, when less than a week will remain before the strike is due to begin. The issues are, in any case, complicated, and if the interval should prove too short for arranging a settlement, the employers must be held responsible for wasting the opportunity which the necessity of a month's notice before terminating the existing agreement was specially designed to afford. Both sides have stated a case during the past week. In regard to the demand for an increase of 2s. a day in wages, the union points to the rise in the cost of living, and asserts that shipping companies and merchants, who are said to employ about half the dockers, are making profits sufficiently large to meet their demands. In reply, the employers declare that in many cases the employer is a statutory authority, which is not on a profit-making basis, and that therefore a higher wages cost must infallibly be passed on to the consumer: no mention is made of the shipping companies or merchants. The employers also declare that the number of men on rates above the minimum is very large: the present average daily rate for the majority of London dockers is given as 11s. 6d., or 1s. 6d. above the minimum, and the dockers' demands would therefore establish a rate of 13s. 6d., which is certainly high in terms of wages per hour.

* * *

The present wage-rates at the docks would, in truth, be fully high enough in relation to wages generally if the dockers were employed on a regular basis. The trouble is that they afford an inadequate weekly income to the docker who obtains only two or three days' work in the week. To increase the daily rate, however, can only tend to aggravate this under-employment, which is the problem that cries for remedy. It is the demand for a guaranteed weekly wage on which it is therefore desirable that public attention should be concentrated. Ever since the struggle for the "dockers' tanner" in 1889 there has been a succession of inquiries, public and private, into the conditions and results of casual labour at the docks, and the community cannot plead ignorance. The latest inquiry was perhaps the most damning of all; and it seems at first sight astonishing that the weighty words of the majority report of the Shaw Committee should have failed so completely to effect any real reform. The explanation is not, however, very difficult to find. It is idle to expect progress towards decasualization during a period of trade depression. "The ring round the docks" cannot be drawn effectively when unemployment is rife in every trade. With an immense surplus of labour, the employers cannot be expected to guarantee

the maintenance of every man who is hanging round the docks; while the men will, in practice, resist decasualization if it means complete unemployment for a large proportion of them. It is only when trade is active that the problem can be dealt with in a satisfactory way. This means that the opportunity is with us now. Trade is recovering steadily, and, as plans must be matured for some time before they are put into operation, the matter should be taken in hand without delay. The employers have apparently declared that the matter must be dealt with by Parliament, an attitude which is on a par with their refusal to meet the men at all, until the decision to strike was taken. If this is their last word, the Government should certainly intervene.

* * *

The Government of India has done wisely in releasing the Mahatma Gandhi after he has served two out of the six years of his term of imprisonment. He was lately operated on in prison for appendicitis, and spoke warmly of the care and skill placed at his disposal by the authorities. That fact removes any suggestion that the ground of release is other than what it seems, and though there will no doubt be attempts to represent the act as a sign of weakness in face of the growing power of Swaraj, much more capital would have been made by the anti-British factions out of the Mahatma's martyrdom if he had died in prison. His release, therefore, was dictated as much by political wisdom as by humanity, and the Government showed good sense in attempting to impose no conditions. The law stands, and if Gandhi infringes it he can, and no doubt will, be rearrested. Meanwhile, his own position in the changed political conditions of the moment is open to considerable doubt. Swaraj has grown formidable since he was tried and imprisoned, and the movement never had his personal support. He is, indeed, no politician, being guided by his emotions much more than by any constructive aims. The first important question is whether he intends to renew the non-co-operation crusade, a step which would by no means suit the book of Mr. Das and his followers. Swaraj itself looks at the moment like realizing the worst predictions made regarding it. In the Central Provinces and Bengal Council, Government may be held up altogether, while a no-confidence motion in the Legislative Council at Delhi is by no means as certain of defeat as it ought to be. The new peer who was till lately Sir Sydney Olivier has entered on an anxious heritage.

* * *

Zaghlul Pasha, now well settled in the saddle after his astonishing electoral victory, has at last the opportunity of demonstrating his statesmanship. Whether he is a true statesman remains to be seen. There is certainly no reason to pronounce against him on his past record. Responsibility has too often sobered revolutionaries to leave us any excuse for assuming that what the Wafd leader has been in opposition he will necessarily be in office. The most urgent question is the release of persons sentenced in the past by military courts. On that point the British Resident will be wise to go to the limits of concession, though no one can expect the wholesale release, for example, of men found guilty of attempted murder. The differences outstanding between Egypt and Great Britain are all capable of settlement, given good will and good sense on both sides, and it is due to Zaghlul to recognize that his declarations on these matters in the past have not been such as to shut any door on agreement. The best service he can do his country now is to enter forthwith into frank relations with Lord Allenby.

WOODROW WILSON'S ACHIEVEMENT

MEN speak of the failure and the tragedy of Woodrow Wilson. It cannot, indeed, be denied that tragedy and failure have marked the close of his career. Yet it is not just or discerning to pass that judgment upon his work as a whole. The tragedy was not one of moral or spiritual inadequacy. There was no faltering in Mr. Wilson's high purpose. The merely physical collapse of a human being under the strain placed upon him by his own indomitable spirit is not the deepest form of tragedy; and, though his failing health undoubtedly reacted unfavourably upon his conduct of negotiations during the later stages of the Paris Conference, it is broadly true to say, with General Smuts, that: "It was not Wilson who failed. . . . Only a man of his great powers and influence and dogged determination could have carried the Covenant through the Peace Conference. . . . The leader who, in spite of apparent failure, succeeded in inscribing his name on that banner has achieved the most enviable and enduring immortality. Americans of the future will yet proudly and gratefully rank him with Washington and Lincoln, and his fame will have a more universal significance than theirs."

We believe that this is an accurate forecast of the permanent judgment of mankind; but it is difficult, nevertheless, to free ourselves from the sense of present failure. If only Mr. Wilson had been as dominating a figure in Paris as he was when he broadcasted his clear-headed, long-sighted messages from Washington! If only, when he had fought his drawn battle at the Peace Conference, he had been able to carry his own people with him and put the moral power of America behind the Covenant to redress the evils of the Treaty, how different the present state of the world would have been!

Yes, things would be very different if we, the ordinary people of the world, could call in men like gods, with superhuman power and less than human weaknesses, to save us from the penalties of our own mistakes and passions. But the cry for super-men is a vain one. "We are all men," as the late Mr. Clutton-Brock once wrote, "with the same power of making and destroying, with the same divine foresight mocked by the same animal blindness." We should be thankful that the President of the United States at that difficult time was not a Roosevelt, on the one hand, or a Bryan, on the other. It was much to have, during the Great War, a man at the head of the most powerful nation in the world with the vision to see and the power to expound the principles upon which alone a good and lasting peace could be attained. It was much that he was able to bring his people into the war, at a critical moment, with the most clearly defined and disinterested purpose that has ever actuated a belligerent nation. It was much that that same ruler should carry through the negotiations leading up to an armistice and succeed in getting the principles of a just peace accepted in advance by enemies and allies alike. That was the greatest moment in Mr. Wilson's career, when it seemed as though he could lead the nations, almost against their will and in spite of their crafty rulers, into broader, more tolerant, more rational ways. If he had died then, like Lincoln, in the hour of victory, his fame would have been secure. His reputation would have been greater, but his achievement would have been less. For, though from that moment his power declined, the forces of reaction, fortified by four years of hate-propaganda, proving too strong for him, yet he lived to embody in a vicious peace treaty the Covenant of the

League of Nations, "one of the great creative documents of human history."

It is not for European Liberals to blame Mr. Wilson that, having achieved so much, he did not achieve more. Through timidity or impotence, we left him to fight our battle almost single-handed. He had no sure ally among the principals at the Conference, no clear backing from any powerful section of opinion among the peoples. Day by day, he was worn down, physically exhausted and mentally overtaxed by the combined forces of European diplomacy. Still less should we blame him for his ultimate failure to secure the assent of the American people to the miserable document which he was forced to take home to them. In January, 1917, before he brought his country into the war, he realized the painful truth, which he may have lost sight of later, but which has slowly been brought home to us by subsequent events, that victorious nations are not in the mood to be just or generous to their defeated enemies.

"No covenant of co-operative peace," he then observed, "that does not include the peoples of the New World can suffice to keep the future safe against war; and yet there is only one sort of peace that the peoples of America could join in guaranteeing. . . . It must be a peace without victory. I beg that I may be permitted to put my own interpretation upon it, and that it may be understood that no other interpretation was in my thought. I am seeking only to face realities, and to face them without soft concealments."

"Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last—only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit. The right state of mind, the right feeling between nations, is as necessary for a lasting peace as is the just settlement of vexed questions of territory or of racial and national allegiance."

The very essence of the Versailles Treaty was, of course, that of "a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished." Small wonder that the American people refused to ratify it! Nor is it to the point to observe that it was the Covenant itself, and not the territorial divisions or even the reparation clauses of the Treaty, which gave most offence to Mr. Wilson's opponents. It was not the hostility of his political opponents which he had to fear. It was the defection of his friends. The idealists were disappointed and discomfited; his final overthrow was brought about by the combination of many who hated a bad treaty with those who hated the League. Who can say what the result would have been if Mr. Wilson had returned home in good health with a Treaty of Peace based upon the principles he had advocated and the support of every right-thinking man in Europe behind him? We, at any rate, have no right to criticize the people of America for holding aloof from that Treaty—the truth being that neither in Europe nor in America was there "the right state of mind, the right feeling between nations" for peace-making at that time.

It has been thought by some people that the death of Mr. Wilson may give rise to a marked revulsion of feeling in favour of the League of Nations in America. As, however, he had been debarred by ill-health from taking any part in public affairs since he left the White House in 1921, it would be unwise to expect any great immediate change of that kind. But during the past three years opinion has been considerably modified on both sides of the Atlantic; and we confidently look forward to the time when the people of America will not only feel pride in a fellow-countryman who has left a permanent mark upon the history of the world, but will take their full part in carrying to fruition the great work with which his name will always be associated.

THE FRENCH PRESS AND RUSSIA.

(From a French Correspondent.)

L'HUMANITÉ," the chief organ of the French Socialist Party, has recently published, under the sweeping and sensational title of "L'abominable vénalité de la Presse Française," a series of documents, which it states to be drawn from the secret archives of the Russian Government, demonstrating that from 1897 and particularly during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5), right up to the Revolution of 1917, the Imperial Russian Government controlled a substantial number of the leading Paris newspapers, dictated their attitude on foreign policy, and supplied them with considerable sums. The fact that most of the papers attacked have taken so little action against the Socialist organ, seems to indicate that the documents published are authentic.

The Russian Minister of Finance had a representative in Paris, M. Raffalovich, with considerable sums at his disposal to use as he liked. It was he who handled the funds for the French Press. He did not pay out anything himself, but only through the Syndicate of Bankers or through the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, and on the advice of the head of the Stock Exchange, M. de Verneuil. Doubtless he feared to what dimensions its demands might reach, if the Press got wind officially of the fact that the Russian Government thought it important enough to vote it a large appropriation.

Leaving aside the year 1897, when the first distributions were made, let us come at once to the years 1904-5, the time of the Russo-Japanese War and the Moscow riots. Raffalovich then forced the Parisian Press to conceal the news of the Russian disasters in the field and the revolutionary troubles at home. On August 30th, 1904, he wrote to M. Kokovtzev, Minister of Finance, with the object of establishing his appropriation on the basis of the current year. "For the first ten months," he wrote, "the abominable venality of the French Press will have absorbed (over and above the advertising of the loan of 800 millions) a sum of 600 thousand francs, of which the Banks have put up half. . . . This payment is made to maintain Russian prestige, and to soften the systematic attacks made upon the Russian Government in general, though it cannot prevent them. If, in course of time, we wanted to get anything into the papers, we should have to take advantage of circumstances which had given us some influence over them."

On March 1st, 1905, he further outlined his plan. "It is necessary, according to Verneuil, that we should put great pressure on the political section of the newspapers to publish, along with the telegrams, editorial notes calculated to reassure the public about the solvency of Russia and the improbability of revolutionary success. He reckons the expense at between two and three millions for the year. It seems a lot; in February, 1904, it took 1,200,000 francs."

This programme was carried out. One can guess to what extent the French public was kept informed about the real position of affairs in the country of her Ally. M. Raffalovich effected these payments either in the form of financial advertisements, or bogus subscriptions, or even by private cheques slipped from hand to hand.

It would be tedious to set out here the names of all the papers which, according to the published documents, were effectively subsidized by the Russian Government, and the amount of the sums which they received. But among the papers with large circulations, Raffalovich shows that "Le Petit Parisien," "Le Petit Journal," "La Liberté," "Le Figaro," and "Le Temps," cashed the largest subsidies. "Le Matin" also figures on the list with considerable sums. But it claims to be able to

justify the sums it has received by authentic advertisements, not that that signifies that its attitude was uninfluenced by such lucrative contracts.

It may be interesting by way of example to read the following lines from Raffalovich's pen. They show how cleverly the representative of the Russian Finance Minister checked the attacks on his own Government, and indicate the degree to which the news in the most serious and representative organs was independent. The "Temps," in spite of the 100,000 francs it had received in 1905 from the Banking Syndicate, had published a gloomy report upon the state of Russian finance, at the time of the issue of the loan. Raffalovich writes, on March 9th, 1905, that he has sent 1,000 francs "to Hebrard, the editor of the 'Temps,' to influence him." On July 2nd of the same year he is more precise: "Having found it essential to put an end to the veiled attacks of the 'Temps,' I have given orders to bring about an arrangement, which has been carried out, in return for another 3,000 francs."

The "Temps" went on receiving money from Russia for a long time. In the middle of the war, when the Empire was tottering, it undertook to publish special numbers on Russia. A contract on this subject was agreed upon in Petersburg in January, 1916, between the Imperial Minister of Finance and M. Charles Rivet, the Russian correspondent of the "Temps."

The following are its two essential clauses:—

"The Russian Minister of Finance has complete liberty to settle the text of the Russian numbers, which will be published under his sole control. He can therefore dispose as he likes of the whole or part of the 5,000 lines or the equivalent space in each number.

" . . . The Finance Minister gives M. Charles Rivet an annual subsidy of 150,000 francs."

That is only one example. The list of cheques sent by Raffalovich to be distributed to the French Press, which M. Souvarine publishes, is a long one. It amounts to several millions. Even so, these sums did not suffice to attach the Press securely. As soon as the distributions ceased the papers started on new campaigns, doubtless to induce renewed outpourings. From 1906 to 1912 the subsidies decreased. M. Iswolski was able to write to M. Sazonov, Foreign Minister, on October 10th, 1912:—

"From then (1906) until now there has not been one copeck spent on the French Press, and that has undoubtedly resulted in the Press campaigns against us of 1908 and 1910."

In 1912 the largesse was resumed.

What aggravates these acts of corruption—if the documents are authentic—is that the French Government knew about them, encouraged them, and on occasion directed them. In 1905 Rouvier consulted Raffalovich. In 1912, in the letter which we have already quoted, Iswolski was able to write: "From my conversation with M. Poincaré I feel sure that he is ready to give his co-operation in this matter, and to show us the most suitable lines along which to spread out the subsidies."

On February 14th, 1913, he added, still writing to M. Sazonov:—

"In my letter of October 10th/23rd last I told you the cogent reasons in favour of our financial deal with the French Press. In the course of my conversation with the ex-President of the Council, M. Poincaré, now President of the Republic, I was convinced that he shares my opinion on this matter. Furthermore, M. Poincaré has expressed a wish that nothing should be done unknown to him, and that the distribution of the sums

should be effected in co-operation with the French Government, and through M. Lenoir."

On June 4th, 1914, M. Kokovtzev, instructed by Raffalovich, wrote to M. Sazonov the following lines, which indicate the attitude of the Government of the Republic:—

"M. Klotz [he was then Minister for the Interior] insists upon the necessity now of disbursing large amounts to the Press because of the possibility of a campaign against the new military law, and also because of the general embarrassment of the French Government."

One hesitates to speak of the action of a Minister who relies on the funds of a foreign Government to "influence" the Press of his own country in favour of the Government to which he himself belongs. Neither M. Poincaré nor M. Klotz has given an explanation in Parliament of the value, authenticity, and bearing of these documents.

Thus, with the consent and support of the French Government, a foreign Power was able by the vilest methods to suborn the greater part of the Paris Press. The enslaved papers—assuming the correctness of the revelations in "L'Humanité"—encouraged the French public to subscribe to Russian loans which were often described as "formidable escroquerie." They hid from France the advancing decay of the Empire to which she had bound her fate. They defended, for purely selfish interests, a policy which, by its ambitious designs, often inspired solely by dynastic sentiment, helped to create the atmosphere of trouble and ill-will which rendered the conflagration of 1914 inevitable. But this corruption, injected by a foreign Government, did not prevent the so-called patriotic newspapers from denouncing as traitors, as "in the foreigner's pay," those statesmen and politicians who dared to face the danger and tell the truth at the peril of their lives.

A nation pays dear for such things. Who knows what part such systematic poison, extending over many years, may have played in preparing the way for the war? However this may be, the unhappy French investors who were deceived by these methods have totally lost a sum approaching one thousand million pounds sterling—probably more than one-half of the total savings of the country during the period in question.

A PLEA FOR BLUE-BOOKS.

A LABOUR Government is not likely to suffer from a lack of suggestions, either from its supporters or its opponents. Most of the former are gradually resigning themselves to the fact that their champions are not in a position to introduce large measures of legislation; but, as has been pointed out, Governments are concerned with administration as well as legislation, and though the Poplar Board of Guardians may be the first, they will certainly not be the last to point out to Ministers ways in which the administrative policy of their predecessors may be changed for the better. Under the circumstances, one rather hesitates before adding to the chorus of advisers. But there is certainly one small matter in which the Government, with practically no cost to itself, might earn the gratitude not merely of its direct supporters, but of all those who have occasion to study Government official publications.

For a Labour Government especially, it is of the highest importance to keep the public thoroughly informed of all the available facts on subjects of such universal importance as the position of national finance,

the state of trade and industry, the conditions of labour, wages, hours, unemployment, &c. Yet, owing to the recent policy of the Stationery Office (whether or not inspired by some minor Geddes), that is exactly what it cannot do. In the first place, the information, even where available, is either not issued to the public at all, or delayed until it has become stale beyond measure.

Take the publications relating to Labour—a peculiarly bad case. Before the war there were issued regularly (1) "Standard Time Rates" of wages in various trades, supplemented by an annual volume giving changes in rates of wages and hours of labour during the year; (2) a triennial "Report on Trade Unions," covering the whole of the Trade Union world, not merely those Unions which, being registered societies, come within the purview of the Chief Registrar; and (3) an "Abstract of Labour Statistics," which contained extremely valuable material for the social student. All these were suspended during the war, which perhaps was only to be expected. But as soon as the war was over their issue should have been resumed. Only one of them—"Standard Time Rates"—has ever been reissued. This one was dated 1921; its figures relate largely to 1920, when wages were still rising rapidly. No supplement has ever been issued. Consequently, the miserable wretch who wishes to check the newspaper figures of wages in such and such a trade has to plough through sheaves of bewildering figures in thirty-six numbers of the "Labour Gazette," with all the odds on getting his facts wrong in the end. Of course, it is theoretically possible to write to the Ministry of Labour, but that is hardly a substitute for a book containing the figures, which can be kept on the shelf and consulted at will.

Other Labour publications are no less lacking. The last "Industrial Directory" was published in 1919, and is now quite useless. There has been no Report on Co-operative Societies (except a single sheet of figures) since 1912, no Report on Collective Agreements since 1910, and no proper report of the activities of the Industrial Court since its inception. True, there was a "Report on Profit-sharing and Industrial Co-partnership," issued in 1920; but even the most ardent advocate of profit-sharing would hardly contend that its statistics supplied an adequate guide to the position of the British working-class.

In other departments of State the position, though not quite so bad as in the case of Labour, is yet bad enough. Here it is a question rather of unreasonable delay. To take two examples only. The "Finance Accounts," which used to appear in May, did not come out last year until November. As these accounts have to be ready for the Budget statement in the spring, there seems no reason, other than Departmental inertia, why they should not be issued at least in the early summer. The "Statistical Abstract," again, used to be published about August. Year by year the date has been creeping later and later, until last year it did not appear at all. We are still awaiting it. When it comes, it will contain financial figures up to March, 1922, figures of trade and navigation to the end of 1921, and educational figures up to March or June of that year. On these crumbs of comfort the investigator or expert will have to subsist until some time in 1925. At this rate, we shall begin to know something about the effect of a Labour Government upon finance and industry a year or two after it has fallen!

It does not seem much to ask of a Labour Government that it should produce these figures promptly and fully. For observe, it is not a question of setting on foot new and expensive inquiries, and disturbing Mr. Snowden in his efforts to make the Budget balance. The

figures are there, eating their heads off in the files in Whitehall—it is no secret that officials of the Ministry of Labour have actually prepared for issue information whose publication was prevented by the descending axe—and it is a matter of a few hundred pounds at most to produce them for sale at a reasonable price.

"At a reasonable price." The present prices charged by the Stationery Office are out of all reason, and, indeed, unless they are reduced, it will be of little use for Mr. MacDonald to produce any of the suggested publications, for of his supporters practically none, and of his opponents very few, will be able to afford them. It was in 1835 that the reformed House of Commons, acting on the recommendation of an advisory committee, ordered that its papers should be made available to the public "at a reasonable price," and until the middle of the war this principle was fairly well observed. Then the change began. "Hansard," previously sold at 2d., was put up to a shilling—it has since come down to 6d., but is still three times the pre-war price. Other publications have followed suit. Thus, the Chief Registrar's Report on Trade Unions, which cost 1s. 2d. in 1913, cost 5s. 6d. for one-third the number of pages in 1921; the "Statistical Abstract" has risen from 2s. 6d. to 10s., and the "Annual Statement of Trade," which used to be published in three volumes at 16s., now appears in four volumes issued at odd intervals, and its price is £5 12s. The Ministry of Health's Annual Report contains, for four shillings, far less than did the old Local Government Board Reports, which were issued in two volumes for 1s. 9d. Last year the Board of Education issued, after an interval of eight years, its "Educational Statistics"; but they cost, not 1s. 1d., but 8s. Reports of Government Committees, such as the Commission on Industrial Unrest, used to cost from 2d. to 6d. or 7d.; they now cost from 9d. to 4s. or 5s. For a penny nowadays nothing can be bought except an unintelligible Order of some Ministry or other; even the Chief Registrar coolly charges 6d. for a single sheet of paper, covered with figures on one side only. What the general volumes on the Census will cost when they come out is too terrible to contemplate.

Now this, however it has arisen, is a serious position. As these publications must in any event be issued to Members of Parliament, it was formerly the practice to debit the original cost to the Exchequer, and to charge the public merely the cost of producing the additional copies for sale. Now, apparently, the purchasers have to bear a proportion of the whole cost of printing each Blue-book, and the Government fixes selling prices just as though it were an ordinary publisher. This is sheer nonsense. Government publications are not a commercial proposition, as the Stationery Office would very soon discover if it had to live by them. Few of us have that ardour for statistics which would make us go without boots or bread in order to purchase the "Statistical Abstract." There are, it is true, public libraries. But apart from the inconvenience of going out to a public library every time a single figure is wanted, how many public libraries regularly purchase Government publications?

No. Blue-books are in the nature of a debt which the Government of the day owes to its constituents, and a Government which is anxious to govern with its cards on the table will find that its interest lies in spreading its Blue-books as widely as possible. The taste for accurate information about affairs of State, as about anything else, is an acquired taste, and must be gently fostered. But Blue-books sold at four times their natural price will always be caviare to the general.

M. I. COLE.

LIFE AND POLITICS

MR. MACDONALD'S first great stroke of policy has had a remarkable public acceptance. The announcement that we are at last on speaking terms with the Russian Government has raised hardly a ripple of protest on the journalistic waters, and the only expression of disapproval I have heard comes from Italy, where Signor Mussolini finds himself anticipated, with whatever loss of advantage the loss of priority in the race involves. It is tolerably certain that the countries of the world will be tumbling over each other in their eagerness to follow the British lead, but nothing can rob Mr. MacDonald of the distinction of having set the fashion. It is the boldest and best act of policy done by this country since the war, and the December election was worth having if only to substitute this plain business acceptance of facts for the pompous obstinacy of Lord Curzon.

* * *

"Now he belongs to the ages," said Stanton, when Lincoln had drawn his last breath. The same prophecy in regard to Woodrow Wilson's place in history has been freely made and as freely challenged. The point of view depends on whether one stresses the emphasis he laid on the League of Nations idea or his failure at the Peace Conference to hold his own against the more supple minds with whom he was matched. Much depends on the future of the League. It cannot survive in its present truncated and shadowy state. It will either possess the field or disappear from the field. In the latter case Woodrow Wilson will be remembered by his failure; in the former case he will live as one of the supreme figures in the secular history of mankind, for the League was his child, and to secure it he bargained away precious things and allowed himself to be manoeuvred into condoning an iniquitous peace. If he had not been repudiated by his own country, I think his calculation that any price was worth paying to get it would have been justified ere this. In the light of the events of the last five years he gambled ruinously. But the ultimate verdict on him rests with the League. If it lives it will be the most shining memorial of statesmanship in history, and Woodrow Wilson will "belong to the ages" as assuredly as Lincoln.

* * *

What will be the reaction of the event upon the cause of the League? The Americans are not an unsentimental people, and for the moment there is a great revulsion of feeling towards the ex-President and the cause he represented. I see that the Washington correspondent of the "Times" warns his readers against assuming that this means a change of heart in America on the subject. He even thinks that Woodrow Wilson's death will lead the Democrats to disburden themselves of the League ideal which they continued to honour out of respect to their great leader. That may be so, but it will only be temporarily so. There is a powerful pro-League current in American thought, and if the League becomes the reality that Mr. MacDonald clearly hopes to try to make it, the grounds of American hostility will largely disappear. It is significant that the only people who go in large numbers to Geneva in order to study the League at work are Americans, and as time shows the impracticability of "isolation" in the world as it is and the present post-war mood of reaction subsides, the Wilson ideal will gain power and impetus.

* * *

The question of the position which the Liberal Party will occupy in the House when it meets next week is

still under discussion, but I do not imagine that there is any real doubt that it will be below the gangway-on the Government side. I hear that it is probable that Mr. Asquith will inaugurate in the House the practice which Lord Rosebery introduced into the House of Lords, and which is now often followed there, of going to the table to address the House. It would obviously be an awkward breach of habit if, after having the small conveniences which the table affords the speaker for a Parliamentary lifetime, party leaders had to speak from the inconvenient benches of the private member.

* * *

It is fortunate that the dock authorities have retreated from an impossible attitude, and have agreed to meet the men on their demands. The original refusal was due, I hear, less to the wish of the employers than to a mischievous influence in the background that might usefully be dispensed with. But the mischief is done, and it has brought the negotiations, which might have been amicable and reasonable, under the shadow of a definite declaration of a national strike if the demands are not conceded. It is to be hoped that the lesson of the recent railway strike will not be ignored. If that strike could have been avoided by the concession that was subsequently made the public have a serious grievance against the companies. In the present case it is argued that the conditions of trade do not warrant the 2s. a day concession, but there is pretty strong evidence of an upward tendency in trade, and the method suggested by the case of the locomotive men, of an *advance* by instalments at fixed intervals, ought to offer a way of escape from what would be a calamitous struggle.

* * *

A singularly stupid and ill-mannered tirade appeared in Wednesday's "Morning Post," in regard to the statement that Herr Sthamer, the German Ambassador in London, proposes to hold a reception at Carlton House Terrace in honour of the Government. Did the Ambassador pay this tribute to the preceding Government? asks the writer. He certainly did not, and the insulting references to Germany which follow pretty clearly indicate why he did not, and what would have happened to Mr. Baldwin from his backwoodsmen if, having had such an invitation, he had dared to accept it. Apparently, in the view of these besotted Die-Hards, the war is to go on everlastingly and we are never to have a friend in the world again except with the sanction of M. Poincaré. Mr. MacDonald has blown this insanity to the winds, and the air in Europe is fresher and cleaner already. He represents the best thought of the country in restoring friendly relations with everybody who desires to be friendly, and enabling the world to get out of the war atmosphere that has asphyxiated it so long. As for Herr Sthamer, everyone who has the privilege of his acquaintance will resent the boorish vulgarity of the "Morning Post." No one ever had a more difficult task to perform than that which Herr Sthamer undertook nearly five years ago. He has performed it with a dignity and good temper that have won him a respect and a confidence which few Ambassadors have the good fortune to inspire. He is not, of course, a professional diplomatist, but a man of affairs with business connections with Hamburg. His wife, who is an American, is as highly regarded in her own way as he is himself. May it be long before there is a change of tenants in Carlton House Terrace!

* * *

I understand that the Liberals have decided to leave the field free to Mr. Arthur Henderson at Burnley. It is a handsome gesture, in view of the record and character

of the constituency, and it is to be hoped that the Liberal electors will vote in the spirit of the decision. On the face of it, Mr. Henderson should have an easy task, but those who know the constituency well do not think so. It has, I am told, the most powerful working-men's club vote in the country, and Mr. Henderson as a teetotaler will not command it, as his predecessor did.

* * *

The civil war in the Conservative Party over the question of the leadership will reach its crisis on Monday, when the decisive battle will be fought out at the Hotel Cecil. Informed opinion, I find, inclines to the view that Mr. Baldwin will be given a nominal victory, chiefly because there is no other personality that commands confidence or awakens enthusiasm of any sort, and partly because, with all his childlike incompetence, Mr. Baldwin is personally popular and there is a wish to save his face. But that his leadership will be a reality, or that it will even continue nominally for any length of time, is a view that few people regard seriously. Probably Mr. Baldwin regards it with as little seriousness as anybody, and, should he have the compliment of re-election, will himself take the first convenient opportunity of recovering his freedom and returning to the contemplation of his pigs. There is an almost unprecedented opening in the Conservative Party—unprecedented certainly since Dizzy "jumped the claim"—for a bold and adventurous leader with brains.

* * *

Here is an impromptu which, I think, deserves putting on record:

A. (fresh from Hodgson's sale room on Wednesday): The first edition of "Sense and Sensibility" went for £23.

B. (who doesn't know the secrets of his library): Have I got a first edition of "Sense and Sensibility" in my library?

A. (who does): You have.

B. (laughing): Then I'll sell it.

C.: Sir, you have Sense but not Sensibility.

A. G. G.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

THE LIBERAL PARTY.

"IT is come," wrote the greatest of all Christian apologists in England nearly two hundred years ago, "it is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much a subject for inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious," "and accordingly," he continues, "they treat it as if in the present age this was an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world."

The verdict of Bishop Butler on the criticism of Christianity is the verdict to-day of the critics of Liberalism. In the debate on the Address, Labour and Socialism were almost left alone by the Tories, who concentrated all their fury upon Liberalism. That party was also attacked in Parliament from the back Labour benches as being a corpse which is cumbering the ground. Curiously enough, those who are most fierce in denunciation or in prophecies of ruin are not the men who have grown up all their political life as members of an Independent "Labour" party, but the "converts" who have gone over to what appeared to be a winning side when Liberalism seemed dead. Each of these two extreme groups seemed to desire the naked class war, and each seems to think that it will gain by the removal of this great historic party of all classes. The

Tories believe that in such removal they can secure the assistance of every man who owns a house or a chicken-coop or has a few pounds invested in the funds. The Socialists believe that by the decease of such a party they could secure the allegiance of every man who desires progressive reform.

What evidence is there that historical Liberalism is on the verge of annihilation either in Parliament or in the support of the electorate, or in the world of ideas and ideals? No one would deny, I think, that, if judged by test of experience and talent, the Liberal Party in the House of Commons would obviously come out first. It would not only come out first. It would come out at least equal to a combination of all other parties. It possesses two ex-Prime Ministers: each in his own way supreme. The one is unchallengeable for dignity, understanding of the House, and a kind of personal supremacy in debate, as exhibited in his masterly speech on the Address. The other possesses the subtlest, quickest, and cleverest mind which has ever played with the various phases of Parliamentary life. It possesses half a dozen ex-Cabinet Ministers, of varied talent and opinion, but most of them young according to Parliamentary standards; all of whom have had actual experience of administration of great Departments of the State. It possesses at least a dozen men who have held subordinate positions in past administrations, and whose talents would certainly entitle them to attainment of Cabinet rank. And it possesses among its private Members men who could easily go on to the Front Bench with the approval of the whole House; such as, for example, Mr. Pringle, who often dominates the Parliamentary situation; or Mr. Isaac Foot, a man of knowledge and eloquence, who holds Cornwall in the hollow of his hand; or Commander Kenworthy, whose energy is recognized with an almost unwilling admiration even by the Tories themselves; or many others. And among new Members, it has been reinforced by a group of social reformers full of energy and intelligence, with strong views concerning immediate social questions, such as Mr. E. D. Simon, late Lord Mayor of Manchester, with his great experience on the Housing question; or Mr. Ramsay Muir, who has laid down the lines in print of a Liberal industrial policy, and who won so sensational a victory at Rochdale over a sitting Labour Member.

These are only its leaders, actual or potential, in the House of Commons. In the House of Lords, its Party, although small, is obviously the most distinguished, both in international reputation and in the resources of knowledge and experience. And outside Parliament, among men who could be included in a possible future Liberal Administration, you have a variegated source of talent, Right, Centre, and Left, of persons of proved ability, many of whom have administered many Departments of the State. Such, for example, are Mr. McKenna, whom even the sane Tories desired for Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Runciman, who, whatever his opinions, at least demonstrated an extraordinary efficiency when in office; Sir Donald Maclean, perhaps in the country the best beloved and most trusted of all the Liberal leaders; men like Sir Harry Verney, with his experience at the Board of Agriculture, and Mr. Henry Vivian of the Co-operatives, and Mr. J. M. Robertson, whose controversy in Tariff discussion resembles a series of hammer blows. You may add to these that bright Oriental star, Sir Alfred Mond, and that bright Occidental star, Mr. Winston Churchill, who, whatever his aberrations, remains an unchallengeable master of debate in the House of Commons, a brilliant orator in the country, and an opponent alike of Protection and Socialism, and a professed adherent to the Liberal programme.

It is true that these men are of divers opinions, as, indeed, the Liberal Party for hundreds of years has been composed of men of divers opinions, in which it was frequently stated that the Radicals did all the work and the Whigs got all the offices. But it is quite evident that

within the organization of the Liberal Party there is no greater divergence than that between Free Trader and Protectionist among the Tories, or that between social reformer and Communist among the supporters of the present Government. So far as personnel is concerned, it is obvious that there could be formed out of the Liberal followers both a Government of the Right superior in intelligence and attainment to any Tory Right administration, and a Government of the Left, equally superior, in comparison of man to man, to the present so-called "Labour" Administration. And both would consist of younger men than the men of the past or the present Cabinets.

Yes, it is said, undoubtedly you have experienced leaders. But you have no policy or programme, you have no following in the country, you have nothing to inspire either faith, hope, or charity. What nonsense is all this talk! At the general election, Liberalism polled practically as many votes as Labour. The pundits in electoral statistics (men of no party, who only seek the truth without prejudice) have even demonstrated from the calculation of votes and unopposed returns, that the Liberal should be the second party in Parliament, and now in office. But for the fact that only three weeks were given to heal a bitter feud of six years, Liberalism would undoubtedly be the second largest party in the House of Commons. But for the calamitous coupon election of 1918, Liberalism would undoubtedly have a majority to-day over all other parties combined. It is true that Labour has swept Liberalism out of certain industrial centres. But in each case there is an easy explanation. Thus in Leeds and Bristol and Norwich, Liberalism was deliberately killed by its five years of alliance with Toryism under the Coalition, and everything that was alive forsook it. In some districts, and especially in the English County districts, Liberalism has substantially improved its position as against "Labour" and Socialism in less than twelve months between the last two elections. In many of the great towns it has actually won back seats which it had lost to "Labour." The idea that one party is full of energy and sacrifice and that the other is waiting in lethargy like the Gods in the Valhalla for its inevitable doom is an idea which belongs to the region of dreams.

Nor is the statement any less false which perpetually asserts that Liberalism presents no inspiring faith by which a man can live. It refuses, indeed, to present either of two enormous overturnings of the social and economic fabric, each of which can excite enthusiasm, especially among the young and inexperienced, always inflamed by the vision of some terrific upheaval to right human wrongs. It is saving the country from Protection on the one hand, which would mean the slow throttling of British export trade and therefore of British prosperity. It is saving the country from Socialism or Communism on the other, which would mean here, as in Russia, the sudden ruin of such trade and prosperity, like the sudden stopping of a clock. But it has formulated and is preaching a definite policy of specific remedy for specific ills, which would occupy the energies of the lifetime of at least two Parliaments.

And if the present Government remains in power for more than a few months, it can only do so by passing measures which a Liberal Government itself would have passed had no Labour Party existed at all.

No one should under-estimate its difficulties in the present Parliament. The almost incredible weakness of the Tory opposition will make its intervention in debate embarrassing. It will have to contemplate its own work being done, and perhaps done fumblingly, by other hands. It will see the *arriviste*, the wealthy ambitious, the lawyer, passing over in numbers to what appears to be now the victorious side. But with faith in its future, sustained by great enthusiasm in the constituencies and the quite astonishing recruitment at the last election of young men and women to its ranks, it is undoubtedly destined to play a large, even a dominant, part in human affairs.

M.P.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"GOLD IN 1923."

SIR,—In the article on "Gold in 1923" in your issue of February 2nd the possibility is discussed of the United States of America closing its mints to the free coinage of gold. That action, it is asserted, could be undertaken "without upsetting any American interest." The writer then goes on to explain that a rise of sterling to its gold value would follow, and that a tendency would develop for gold to accumulate in London instead of in America. To avoid the evils of a redundant stock of gold, this country would then also have to close its mints to the free coinage of gold. The fall in the value of gold which would ensue would lighten, the article proceeds, our burden of debt to America, which is fixed in gold.

Is there not inconsistency in these statements? The fall in the value of gold obviously cannot lighten our burden of debt to America and at the same time fail to upset "any American interest."

But let us consider whether it is reasonable to suppose that the U.S.A. would take action in the direction suggested.

It is true that the stock of gold in America has become redundant, and that this redundancy not only constitutes an economic waste, but also involves the danger of inflation. As to the latter, those in control of the currency and credit policy of America have shown by their actions during the last eighteen months that they know how to combat the danger. American prices have remained virtually stable since July, 1922. (The extreme range of fluctuation was between 163 and 170, the figure in July, 1922, being 165, and in December, 1923, 163.) Need we doubt that they will be equal to the task even if the stock of gold should increase further? And as to the former, what are the compensating factors of the waste? America has so far refused—for reasons of her own—to accept from her foreign debtors payment either in goods, services, or securities. She has accepted gold from them, and in doing so has secured a free option to acquire goods, services, and securities in exchange for the gold whenever it happens to suit her.

America has claims on foreign countries arising out of the war which now total about 11,500 million dollars. These claims are receivable in gold. There is accumulated in America gold to the approximate value of 3,800 million dollars, so that the total gold holdings and claims to gold amount to 15,300 million dollars.

It is obviously in the interests of America to avoid depreciation of this asset, and it is sound business to pay some premium to ensure against such depreciation. The premium America pays is the loss of interest she suffers on that part of her gold holding which may be regarded as redundant.

Central note issuing banks in gold standard countries used normally to hold before the war gold reserves to cover their liabilities of around 50 per cent. Applying that ratio to the position in America, it may be said that any gold holding in excess of a 50 per cent. cover of liabilities in the Federal Reserve system may be regarded as redundant. To cover the liabilities of the Federal Reserve Banks by 50 per cent. would call for approximately 2,100 million dollars of gold, so that 1,700 million dollars may be regarded as redundant. The loss of interest at 4 per cent. on the latter amount equals 68 million dollars per annum, and represents the waste suffered by maintaining this redundant gold holding. That amount, if looked upon as an insurance premium against the depreciation of America's holding and claims of gold, equals just over two-fifths of 1 per cent. per annum, and involves a burden on the nation of 60 cents per annum per head of population, a paltry affair if the writer of your article is right in his anticipation as to the effect which the closing of the mints in America would have on the value of gold.

Under these circumstances, is it likely that the United States will find it to their advantage to close their mints?

Bank directors of the present day are realists no less than were their predecessors of Egypt and Chaldea. They know that "the object of Oriental splendour" (gold) has the unrivalled property of being capable of conversion into goods and services the world over and in almost all circumstances. For that reason alone they consider it prudent to hold reserves in that form, even though gold may sometimes

buy a little more and sometimes a little less of goods and services.—Yours, &c.,

H. STRAKOSCH.

45, Chester Square, London, S.W.1.
February 6th, 1924.

SIR,—In his article headed "Gold in 1923," "J. M. K." examines the possible effect of the United States deciding to close their mints to gold. He says:—

"It is worth pointing out that our debt to America is fixed in gold, that the annual burden of this is several times as large as our annual profits from gold-mining, and that every fall in the value of gold lightens this burden."

The argument is clearly that a fall in the value of gold would be advantageous to this country because the benefit arising from the reduction in the real burden of the American debt would more than compensate us for the loss in profits from gold-mining. This is obviously true as far as we are a debtor country. But "J. M. K." does not analyze the effect of a fall in gold on our Colonial and Foreign Investments.

Last year, according to the estimate of the "Board of Trade Journal," the net return of our overseas investments, after allowing for the interest on the American debt, amounted to £150,000,000. These investments largely consist in sterling obligations at fixed rates of interest, as, e.g., Indian and Colonial Government Loans, Railway Debenture and Preference Stocks, &c.

It would, I am sure, be of great interest to those of our readers who have followed "J. M. K.'s" views on Currency Reform, if he would examine this problem. It is clear that the interest on the debt owed to us is far more important a factor in our economic life than interest on the debt owed by us. If, therefore, there is a serious fall in the value of gold, and our currency resumes its pre-war basis, there will be a material reduction in the real or commodity value of the interest we receive on a large part of our foreign investments.

If, on the other hand, as "J. M. K." indicates, as a possible result of American policy, this country also closes its mints to gold, our currency will rise to a premium in gold. But in this case, can we expect our debtor countries to pay interest in sterling on this basis on debts contracted in the main when sterling was interchangeable for gold at a fixed ratio? Will they not maintain with some justice that as their debts were, in effect, contracted on a gold basis, they should be entitled to repay principal and interest on this basis? In which case Great Britain, on balance, would suffer from a fall in gold.—Yours, &c.,

C. R. V. COUTTS.

"THE PROLETARIANS."

SIR,—The cynicism of your contributor "M.P." rather appals one. If this is to be the attitude of Liberals towards the Labour Government, it is not very hopeful.

"M.P." insinuates that the Labour Government is to all intents and purposes a fraud and a sham, and its members mostly hypocrites. It has, he asserts, no claim to call itself a Labour or Socialist Government, because it includes "two wealthy sons of Baronets . . . and is largely a Cabinet of rich men, capitalists or brewers." He sees no reason why Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook should not have been included in the Cabinet. These absurd and rather spiteful statements can hardly be taken seriously.

But has "M.P." no conception of an abstract sense of justice? What has the well-off gentleman to gain from Socialism and joining the Labour Party? I must admit—nothing, in the material sense. Without questioning the convictions of the Socialist working-man, his creed is often and naturally the result of a hard personal experience. But it is possible, though "M.P." may find it difficult to believe, for those who live in easy and pleasant circumstances to feel deeply and sincerely the injustices of our social system, and to wish to see a fairer distribution of those things which go to make life worth living.—Yours, &c.,

DOROTHEA PONSONBY.

Haslemere, February 5th, 1924.

SIR,—As a Liberal I deeply regret the tone of M.P.'s comments in your last two issues on the composition of the new Government. To say that "It is a Cabinet which has no claim to call itself Labour," and that "the bulk of its

members seem to consist of wealthy and comfortable individuals who are neither Socialists nor have had any direct experience of the life of the poor," is a travesty of the facts.

Of the forty-seven names announced, thirty are of people who graduated in the school of clerical or manual labour. For instance, Mr. Jowett went into a textile factory at the age of eight, Mr. Thomas began work at nine, Mr. Wheatley (M.P.'s "capitalist publisher") and Mr. Adamson at eleven (the latter working for twenty-seven years as a miner), Mr. Lawson was working in a mine at twelve—and the list might be prolonged. Then there are six middle-class men who supported the Socialist, Fabian, or Labour movements when rewards were few and when office was unthought of. Lord Haldane devoted the leisure which was forced upon him by the Yellow Press to a splendid campaign on behalf of adult education, and Lord Parmoor made a stand for civil liberty and fair treatment of unpopular points of view which more than redeemed his unregenerate past. As for the five ex-Liberals (not including Lord Haldane), we can only hope that in the hard exigencies of office they will be able to live up to the high-flown professions with which they left us, but in any case they cannot be accused of having consciously taken a short cut to preferment.

There are many good reasons for keeping the Liberal Party alive and active, but on sound Liberal grounds we ought to rejoice at the spectacle of a Government the majority of whose members went to the mine, the weaving shed, or the counter when still children. This is the culmination of a century of Liberal and Radical effort, and while less than justice is done to Liberals at the moment, their best policy from every point of view at present is to heap coals of fire. —Yours, &c.,

T.

THE HOUSING PROBLEM.

SIR,—The article on the housing question by Mr. E. D. Simon in *THE NATION* and *THE ATHENÆUM* for January 26th, tempts me as an unemployed member of the building trade to offer a few remarks. One of the vital factors of the problem is undoubtedly the shortage of bricklayers and plasterers, while at the same time there is a vast superabundance in some other trades, such as the painters and decorators. If you could by a stroke of the pen transform a superfluous painter into a useful bricklayer the problem would be simplified. Amongst the vast number of unemployed painters one is forced to notice that the majority are over fifty years of age, men who have never done anything else but decorative work, and are a highly skilled class. On the other hand, a visit to a shop or job will reveal the curious fact that the majority of those who are in work are post-war men who have picked up a bit of practice here and there. But as they mostly have youth on their side, this is regarded as a compensating balance against lack of experience. This is *dilution*. The painting trade has always been afflicted with dilution, especially in the southern counties of England. The idea that anybody can do painting has been very prevalent. Local governing bodies have been the worst offenders in this respect. I have seen all sorts of unskilled men set to do painting jobs while the legitimate painter in the same district was unemployed and had to pay rates to provide wages for the man who was ousting him out of his job. I admit that a good deal of the work does not require a high degree of skill, but there is neither reason nor justice in depriving the skilled man of his share of the work. The result is the work costs more than it ought, and the high cost diminishes demand and hence unemployment.

The position of the bricklayer is just the reverse of that of the painter. Everybody realizes that the provision of more houses is urgent and imperative, and that the number of bricklayers available are not sufficient to cope with the demand. The bricklayers themselves say we may bring in more boy apprentices. Even so, there are not enough of them, and even if there were, the time it takes to train a boy into a skilled workman is too long to have any appreciable effect on the immediate housing problem. Nobody advocates the sudden transformation of middle-aged painters into bricklayers. By a process of selection it would be possible to train some adults, within certain ages, into passable mechanics, and I suggest this way out of the problem. Some opposition would come from the organized men, but this, I am sure, could be mollified by the application of proper safeguards. There would be no lack of suitable applicants. Men are to

be found who are willing to make almost any sacrifice for the sake of security of continuous employment. The cost of the experiment must be taken into consideration. All the time a man is learning a new trade he is a loss, but the loss diminishes as he grows in dexterity. True, there are differences in intelligence, adaptability, and temperament. One would become an efficient in six months, another would take a year. Naturally the question as to who is going to bear the cost arises. The cost of the man's maintenance during the probationary period is the chief item. We cannot expect the master builder to shoulder this burden, and no workman ought to be asked to bear it.

I would suggest that the probationer be paid full wages from the start, the difference between what he receives and what he earns to be made up by a Government subsidy, and to be regarded as a debt to be repaid in weekly instalments deducted from his wages. This method would form a stimulus, and the energetic and industrious workman would quickly free himself from all liability. Of course, a person undertaking this sort of enterprise is really effecting a mortgage on his future activities. The community would have to make proper safeguards and a very careful examination of every candidate, which is not a new system, as the insurance companies are doing this every day.—Yours, &c.,

JOSEPH DEVINE.

10, Lower Boston Road,
Hanwell, W.7.

FREE TRADE IN MUSIC.

SIR,—The British electorate has lately repudiated with emphasis the policy of protection for home produce and manufactures. Would that our people cared sufficiently for internationalism in art to support Free Trade in music!

In to-day's "Times" appeared a letter, signed by Sir Hugh Allen and Sir Alexander Mackenzie, deprecating the proposed visit to London of the Vienna State Opera Company, on the ground of possible injury to the B.N.O.C. This, they say, is a "real home product," it "fights its plucky way," its work is "brilliant in promise." Promise may be shown, but scarcely performance, if one may judge from the verdict of numerous critics writing in journals of high repute. These are constantly pointing to the "raggedness" of orchestral work at Covent Garden, due, with other deficiencies, to insufficient rehearsal.

Clearly the Vienna Company's performances are dreaded as likely to emphasize those defects, by comparison.

Everyone interested in the best music and acting has heard of their excellence, and of the perfection of the orchestra.

If those who care first of all for good art are prevented by our protectionists from enjoying it, we shall be driven to Austria or Germany to seek it.—Yours, &c.,

E. S.

Hitchin, February 5th, 1924.

A NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHILDHOOD.

By MARY MacCARTHY.

V.*

IT continued bitter cold all that Lent. Our colds in the head were terrific; one girl had pneumonia in a room adjoining our dormitory, and the sound of her ravings is vivid to me this day. Father Eustace padded down through the frost-bound passages one night, accompanied by black veiled forms, to take her the last sacrament. But she recovered from her illness; she survived.

Then there was Barbara G.'s St. Vitus's dance, too. She was pretty, lifeless, well dressed and unhappy—the only aristocrat in the school. Feeling ill and weak, she was slack at her lessons, her brain was anæmic, and she looked vacant. Sister Anna Alexandra said that she was lazy and that she did not exert her will. She goaded at her; she clapped a dunce's cap upon her head.

* Part I. appeared in *THE NATION* and *THE ATHENÆUM* for September 1st, 1923; Part II. on September 8th; Part III. on November 3rd; and Part IV. on December 15th.

Barbara, after appearing two days thus coiffed, suddenly lost all control over her limbs. She danced and shuddered involuntarily. We scattered in consternation away from her in all directions, and she was removed from our midst. We could not tell if poor Barbara's spasmodic capers reproached Alexandra. We only hoped so.

And now the great drama of Holy Week had begun; and the altar and images were shrouded in black. Father Eustace and the curates, by this time almost totally emaciated with the Lenten fast, took more and more services; processions of black veiled forms threaded even more and more often through our midst to the church for prayer and office; the church was alive with devotion and was lived in by day and night.

Never shall I forget the absorption of the fine religious mood into which the school now merged itself.

From the day before Good Friday until Easter eve total silence reigned throughout the building. Not a word was spoken in the refectory. We ate in silence, though we were allowed to read our books. We lived almost all day in the church. The loneliness and agony of Jesus in the garden, on the Mount of Olives, were real to us; it was all happening at that actual moment. We were present.

At last came the great Three-hours' service during the Crucifixion; and the seven words from the Cross; the bell tolled twice; there was a long hush. It was finished. The emotion had been tremendous.

The dignity of that dramatic Lent was inspired by ritual and worship. The inspiration came from Rome. The position of the extreme High Church Party in the Church of England seems to me mere obstinacy; for my part I long to see them all under the wing of the Pope.

Easter Day found us in church again with the coming of morning. The black wrappings had been removed, and everything was white and gold, and festive.

After the celebration we trooped into the refectory to find row upon row of eggs in eggcups, like lines of tiny bald men on guard for the festival. When we were seated, a door at the further end opened and the old, old Sister Superior, who very rarely appeared before us, stood there like an apparition and said in a faint voice, "A happy Easter, my children." "Oh yes, the resurrection!" I exclaimed under my breath, as we rose respectfully with a clatter, then clattered down again to our eggs. Her look, like some picture of one risen from the tomb, had suggested the idea, but I did not quite know what I had meant. I wondered a moment after. I think it meant that my fine religious mood was over. I had had enough; I could stand no more; I wanted Easter to be gay and secular.

And now in a very few days our trunks were bumped down from the box-room, and we drove joyfully away. I took the long journey to Devonshire to join my family all by myself. When the train dashed into Barum Station it suddenly seemed as if the sun came gleaming out. After all, it was only young Tom Huxtable, the coach driver, whose scarlet coat, silver grey top-hat, and gaiters were dazzlingly resplendent as he stood on the platform.

He had brought a note to the train from my mother, and in his beautiful soft voice and with his renowned gentle manner he hoped I would come and sit by his side on the coach for the twenty-mile drive before me.

My mother was a great sender of notes to stations, full of emphatic injunctions, often a little difficult to carry out. Evelina had complained on one of our former arrivals of the *infra dig.* caution "to put one

hand in the coachman's pocket and one hand on the outside rail." But this time my solitary arrival had been quite worthy of a grown-up, and the note now did not spoil it. It contained no injunctions. It was full of interesting, if quite irrelevant, matter; the death of Lord Tennyson's shepherd, for instance; the poet Clough was quoted; the word "fantastic" was used and explained. "Fantasy, Fantastic," I vaguely conjugated as I clambered presently up the ladder on to the front seat of the coach. I wondered if Huxtable had read the note.

And now for the best drive in England. First among the orchards and lanes, then up and up to the airy moor. I was full of rapture up there on the coach behind the four horses, driving on and on for the long twenty miles to freedom, proud of being in the seat of honour by the coachman's side, yet comfortably insignificant to the passengers, whose conversation I could mingle with my day-dreaming. I climbed down the ladder and walked up the hills when the burden had to be lightened for the horses, but being in Huxtable's charge I was not allowed inside the "Fox and Goose" Inn when we stopped half-way. I was fed and watered outside with the horses; pails and nosebags for the horses; tea and bread and butter handed up to me.

Then at last Tom, who so resembled Helios, the Sun God, charioted his four steeds down the last steep hill at a reckless gallop, and swept up on the other side as on a cloud or a billow, landing them, with a last long stretch of their legs, in the village.

And yet, for all this gaiety, a fell tragedy, unseen of human eye, hung round his neck the while. Six months later he lay dead in the "Fox and Goose" with a bullet through his head. Beneath his handsome suavity and smiling charm he bore the burden of some intricate depression. He chose death and shot himself. Oblivious, at that moment of alighting, however, of the precariousness of happiness, I climbed down off the coach and said good-bye to him, thanking him for his care. Adela and Evelina had come to meet me, and we all three ran laughing away down the steep lane and out to our house above the sea; wheeling and screaming with pleasure like the gulls below us in the evening sunlight.

There is quite a stir and bustle in the house on my arrival; I am kissed and made a great deal of. I go all over the house and look out of every window. Then after a while I just fit comfortably down into my place in the family again.

At dusk we come into the drawing-room and the lamps are brought in. Antony, who has been out hunting, begins cards with Adela, Evelina and me; Mr. Kestell is playing and singing Mozart's "Così fan tutte" gently to himself, but no one is paying any attention; everyone is talking out loud; Mrs. Kestell, over by the fire, has Newman's "Apologia" on her lap; Henry and Roderick, who have been trout fishing, have now settled down by it, too; they are a little cold to her when she pleads for the Cardinal.

"Certainly he is very narrow over Adam and Eve and the Fall," she concedes.

"It wasn't a fall at all. It was an advance!" says Roderick severely, looking up from his holiday task.

"And Carlyle says he had no more brains than a rabbit," says Henry, looking up from "Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour."

Mrs. Kestell among her family often feels herself to be a little like Alice among the unsympathetic animals of Wonderland.

The music ceases; Mr. Kestell comes over to the fire. He changes the subject, and begs Miss Mary

Coleridge, our guest, who has volumes of Browning piled about her arm-chair, to read out some of the "Flight of the Duchess" or some other poem before dinner.

"Mine. Mine. I was certainly first; it's mine," comes from the cardplayers.

"I am a goddess of the Ambrosial Courts,
And save by Here, Queen of Pride, surpassed
By none whose temples whiten this the world.
Through heaven I roll my lucid moon along;
I shed in hell o'er my pale people, peace;
On earth I, caring for the creatures, guard
Each pregnant yellow wolf and fox-bitch sleek,
And every feathered mother's callow brood,
And all that love green haunts and loneliness."

Mary Coleridge reads, in a low intense voice, from "Artemis Prologizes," till the cough of an old judge who is paying his annual visit to us breaks in. It is a geyser explosion, a thunderstorm, the collapse of a skylight, something quite unique in volume of trashing sound. The unintellectual side of the room is convulsed with a stifled *fou-rire*.

More reading; then a loud gong.

Through the dining-room door the great tureen and pile of plates are seen.

"Let's have charades after dinner," says Teresa as we file in. "No, an opera—Let's have an opera," we cry.

And so the traditional family life goes on. All is safe; it is the nineteenth century; Queen Victoria has us all in keeping. There are no wars, no rumours of wars. Released from my terrible school, as I lie down in my bed, with the murmur of the sea in my ears, I am as happy as a little caterpillar on a fresh green leaf.

WHY ONLY DICKENS?

By MICHAEL SADLEIR.

THE duel between Mrs. Woolf and Mr. J. D. Beresford—with Mr. Arnold Bennett as injured maiden and Mr. Pearsall Smith as authorized purveyor of red-herrings—which has now for several weeks held the attention of THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM readers, tempts me to trespass on the duelling-ground, to hold a handkerchief for the staunching of Mrs. Woolf's Victorian wounds.

As I understand it, the point at issue is whether the modern novelist (which phrase must include alike Edwardian and Georgian writers) excels or yields to his Victorian forbears in power of creating fictional character. Just that and no more. Mr. Pearsall Smith is surely a little impatient with the limitations of what is a legitimate discussion enough? Must a debate on the comparative virtue of mid-nineteenth and early twentieth-century fiction range from Homer, *via* Shakespeare and Cervantes, to Proust?

Let me, at all events, abide by the issue that lies between Mrs. Woolf and Mr. Beresford. Neither of the eminent disputants is wholly free from the tendency to speak of the Victorian novel as though it were epitomized in the works of Dickens and of Thackeray. There are few phrases in current use so misleading as the phrase "Dickens and Thackeray"; which, indeed, either in its isolated connotation or as a summary of mid-Victorian fiction, is ultimately meaningless. Not only are these authors different from one another in nearly every respect, but they are no more representative of the Victorian novel than are Mr. Wells and Mr. Conrad representative of that of to-day.

Dickens is a writer who bulges widely beyond the framework of the novel of his own time, and can hardly be brought within any analysis of the last century and a half of English fiction. He was the proletarian, who raised himself to supremacy by his power

of work, by his untiring and humorous observation, by his instinctive feeling for the miseries and laughabilities of the life of the people. He was not (conventionally speaking) an "educated" man; he was not even a person of sensitive mentality; his understanding of the psychology of the well-to-do, and his sympathy with the evanescent subtleties of (for example) young-womanhood or with the changing moods of abnormal sensibility, were of the bluntest and most elementary kind. Consequently his books are crowded panoramas, of which the figures live in the mind for ever in so far as they are simple, comic, or ruffianly, but are forgotten forthwith when they pretend to represent such blends of good and bad, of strength and weakness, of nobility and frailty, as were the great majority of ordinary folk—then as now.

Thackeray, on the other hand, is the embittered gentleman. He hates his kind as passionately as his great contemporary loved the class from which he sprang. Fastidious, sneering, and essentially stylistic, Thackeray's fiction is in most respects in violent contrast to the genial, uncritical hurly-burly that are Dickens's novels.

But in one respect (as Mr. Beresford perceives) the two are similar. Dickens, by his genius for reducing scattered individuals to a symbol, ridiculous or terrible; Thackeray, determined to express his loathings and cursed with a mind of caustic brilliance—fell, both the one and the other, into the habit of "stunting" a character from the first page of a novel to the last.

Wherefore, if only Victorian fiction ended here, it would be possible to endorse Mr. Beresford's contention that Mr. Bennett "is aware of many things of which Dickens was blandly ignorant"; that the human beings in the modern novel satisfy our modern sense of probability by their irresolutions and their frequent changes of mind, where the creations of (let us say) Thackeray carry to the end of the story the characteristics with which they began it. But with Dickens and Thackeray Victorian fiction barely begins. What of George Eliot? Is there no evolution of character in "Middlemarch"—a story, as it seems to me, in which no single being (save, perhaps, Casaubon, who was the cause of all the trouble) remains unaffected by the happenings of the tale? What of Anthony Trollope? Almost at random one selects names from that throng of characters—Lady Ongar, Lizzie Eustace, the Duke of Omnium himself, and, more emphatically than any, Trevelyan in "He Knew He Was Right." These are personages vividly created and continually developing; dependent, moreover, for their development on the inevitable incidents of the tale. What of Jane Eyre herself? Is she the figment of an imagination aggressively convinced or obstinately self-assured? Has ever novelist presented more delicately and more convincingly the unfolding of a woman's personality than did Charlotte Brontë that of her greatest heroine?

If it were possible to read a Galsworthian "Middlemarch"; a "Jane Eyre of the Five Towns"; or a Wellsian "Last Chronicle of Barset," we should find in the modern renderings qualities the originals do not possess, but (one may hazard) a characterization less permanently memorable. And this for two reasons. In the first place the Victorian novelist spared no pains to make clear to the reader the causes that produced evolution in his characters. Such evolution may be due to heredity, to environment or to accidental happening. If Dickens ignores heredity (which, incidentally, is a bold statement when one thinks of the Pecksniff daughters or of Bella Wilfer), George Eliot does not; nor Trollope. Environment and the events that crowd upon the individual need setting forth and telling forcibly, of which tasks the Victorian was not afraid. Nowadays, on the other hand, incident and fact are often slurred over or left out, the writer seeking to tell his tale by implication rather than by statement, and to develop character or indicate motive along a line of scientific theory rather than within sight of everyone.

The second quality that handicaps a modern, writing in competition with a Victorian, is one that no genius can overcome. Since the middle 'seventies the English

novel has become gradually emaciated. The most considerable of modern fiction is flimsy beside an important story of the eighteen-fifties. Trollope, Thackeray, Reade, and Dickens built their books like pyramids of stone, or piled them tirelessly like hills of broken rock. They were unhindered by the restriction of a single volume; unharried by the petulance of a public debauched by magazines. I am quite serious in thus attributing to publishing procedure and journalistic methods an influence on literary form. There can be no doubt whatever that the greater compression or the lighter weight of modern fiction is due to the limitations of physical space in the printed book and a decline in the habit of concentration among novel readers. The writer of to-day must make his point in half the words allowed to his great-uncle. Inevitably he seeks for subtlety, and, finding it, loses the sympathy of the great public to whom the obvious is the unforgettable.

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA.

IF only Mr. Somerset Maugham had taken the trouble to weed out some of the bad jokes and polish up the phraseology a bit his new comedy, "The Camel's Back," at the Playhouse Theatre, might have been as excellent a contribution to the stage as "The Importance of Being Earnest." Even as it is, it provides an extremely good evening's entertainment, the second act especially being excruciatingly funny. Some critics have said that the play is unpleasant. "Unpleasant" is admittedly a word of elastic meaning, which sometimes takes on the meanings generally given to the word "pleasant," but it is really difficult to stretch it out to include "The Camel's Back," which is a purely fantastic farce, bearing no relation to reality whatever. A wife, galled by a husband who says that "she dresses too young," persecutes him till he goes almost mad on the stage, a proceeding that must be unusual in the most unpleasant families. The dialogue is genuinely witty, the lightheartedness unflinching, and the acting never lets one down. Altogether it is an excellent tonic for the depressed.

"The Eternal Spring," Mr. Peter Garland's comedy produced at the Royalty Theatre, is a strangely old-fashioned affair about the eternal Professor and the eternal young girl. She is not this time his ward, but merely his secretary and the daughter of his old friend. And love comes to them this time not before but after marriage. Otherwise the pattern is quite a normal one. He is extraordinarily forgetful, and we are informed that he is very careless in his dress, though Mr. Dennis Eadie has not the heart to prove the truth of this assertion. She is incredibly girlish and sweet, and her eyes are full of wonder and her heart full of loyalty. At the more emotional moments of the piece someone "off" plays what are supposed to be the pipes of Pan. We also have a statue, straight from Athens, and "in a wonderful state of preservation," of that deity, as well as several lectures on his uncommon powers by the friend of the family. But he is a domesticated Pan, and the proprieties are never in the slightest danger. Mr. Dennis Eadie acted his stage Professor very well. He was quiet and gentlemanly, restrained in his gesture, and his conversational tones did all they could to pass over the greater absurdities in the dialogue. Miss Faith Celli as the young girl

looked very pretty. Whether she need have been quite so sugary in her very sweet part is open to question. But doubtless she did as she was bid.

"The Dare-Devil," at the Strand Theatre, is not a good play; it is a fatal combination of farce and comedy—bad farce, in the form of schoolboy tomfooling in which bombs are drawn up through windows on pieces of string, to explode in gentlemen's tail-coat pockets, and bad comedy, in which Mr. Austin Melford, having imported some promising materials from "At Mrs. Beam's," makes a terrible hash of them. The promising materials consist of the boarding house, complete with inmates, including Miss Cadell, into which an impossibly unsophisticated young man from the country is introduced in the belief that it is a private lunatic asylum. At this point the author has his one moment of inspiration—it is to make Mr. A. W. Baskcomb mistake, and very naturally mistake, the fatuous solemnity and meaningless gestures common to persons "listening-in" for symptoms of insanity. But this is his only moment. As a whole the actors scarcely rise above the level of the play. Miss Jean Cadell as Miss Pym, old maid, journalist, and resident at the boarding house, is disappointing; Miss Pym, we feel, is Miss Shoe fallen upon evil days, robbed of her bubbling vivacity, together with her rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes. A good word must be said for Mr. Baskcomb, the "Dare-Devil"; he plays with considerable restraint a part which gives ample opportunity for noise and vulgarity.

OMICRON.

POETRY

MEMORANDUM.

(For "A Compendium of Military Genius.")

ENTERING the strawberry-foamate demesne,
I pause (a tourist in the present tense),
Spectator of an architectural scene
Of Doric and Corinthian opulence.

Set to the musings of an autumn day
Serenely skied with undistracted grey,
Ducal redundancy (all balustrades,
Pilasters, porticos, and colonnades)
Confronts me. (Vanbrugh made it for the man
Who carved rococo conquests for Queen Anne.)

In wars that burst before the South Sea Bubble
Muskets explode, hussars and pike-men plunder,
While Churchill, stimulating martial trouble,
Perturbs Palatinates with smoke and thunder.
Events unfold. The George Quartet contrives
William, Victoria, Edward; and at last
George Windsor's ermined; ruled by whom, arrives
Myself, obscurely pondering on the past—
Sententious thus. . . . "From halted History comes
The gusty bugling of Malbroukian fame;
And what was once imperious in a name
Recedes with desolate drub of death-led drums.
On regimental flags his fights persist;
But I've no zeal to bolster up the story
Of an imperiwigged, stingy strategist
Who caracoled upon extortionate glory. . . ."

Meanwhile the sun reburnishes the vanes
And orbs of Blenheim Palace; and the clock
Clangs out a modern hour, as if to mock
The mustiness of Marlborough's campaigns.

NOAH FLATUS.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

I MUST confess that the writings of Mr. Tagore have hitherto left me cold. In the original his poems may be real and great poetry; in English they have a thin weakness which may be entirely acquired in their passage from one language to the other, but which, once there, is none the less fatal. The book of his which I have liked best is a slim volume called "Nationalism," published in 1917. Its essays were originally, I believe, delivered in the form of lectures; they are not very profound, but they show an honest and independent mind trying to think along its own path.

Mr. Tagore's new book is a novel with the title "Gora" (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.). It is a very long book, containing over 400 pages, and it is by no means light reading. I would not recommend it broadcast, because probably many people would find it merely boring, but I can only record the fact that to me it was extraordinarily interesting, and that I think it a book of considerable merit. As to the kind and degree of merit possessed by it, I should not like to be dogmatic. One of the most difficult things in criticizing a book which obviously aims at being a work of art is to keep distinct in one's own mind the interest of its subject and its total achievement and effect as a work of art. The difficulty is intensified in the case of a novel like Mr. Tagore's, which may almost be said to be written about a thesis. Here the critic's judgment may be warped or obscured in one of two ways. If the subject is very interesting to him, he may be easily carried away to confuse a profound study of some contemporary problem or an effective political tract with a great novel or play. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," for instance, had considerable merits, but they were not those of a work of art. On the other hand, there is the opposite danger to guard against: the writer's subject may raise so thick a fog of boredom in front of your eyes as to make it impossible to see the artistic merits of his work. A very good instance is "Paradise Lost," for many people, if they were honest, would admit that they find the greatest difficulty in forgetting what Milton is saying in order to be able to listen to his poetry. (There was a minor example of this, I think, the other day in the columns of this paper. In my opinion, the reviewer of "A Week," by Jury Libedinsky (Allen & Unwin, 5s.), missed some real artistic merits in the book because its subject bored him.)

The subject of "Gora" is intensely interesting to me, and Mr. Tagore's handling of it kept me absorbed throughout his book. His thesis is the social, political, and psychological problems which confront the educated Bengali in Calcutta to-day. At the beginning of the story we are introduced to two young men, Gourmohan Babu, or Gora, and Binoy Babu; they are the most ardent nationalists and idealists. Although they have acquired through education the knowledge of the West, they have deliberately turned from it to embrace the strictest form of orthodox Hinduism. In caste and Brahminism and the rigid divisions and formalities of Hinduism they see "India" and the salvation of India. They get to know the family of Paresch Babu, a leading member of the Brahmo Samaj. The tenets of the Brahmo Samaj are the opposite of those of orthodox Hinduism: the Brahmos have turned to Western civilization for both their social rules and philosophy of life; they reject caste, idol worship, and the formalities of Hinduism, and their women folk are "emancipated." It is through the

women of Paresch Babu's family that the clash between the old and the new becomes acute in the minds of the two young Bengalis. For when Binoy falls in love with Lolita and Gora with Sucharita, they have to face the fact that their desires are incompatible with their beliefs and theories.

This is the rough setting which Mr. Tagore has chosen for his picture of Indian life. As a picture of life and of the various currents of theory and belief and aspiration which sweep down upon the young Bengali as soon as he begins to look about him in British India, the book is remarkably interesting. The picture is given mainly through conversations, very long conversations about religion, caste, the position of women, the British in India, and similar "subjects," and here, of course, there is matter for considerable difference of opinion. The subjects happen to interest me, and I never found the book for a moment tedious; but I can imagine that anyone who was not interested in them might find some parts of the book very boring.

And now for "Gora" as a novel, as a work of art. I find it a difficult book to criticize. In form it is very old-fashioned; indeed, it belongs to the antediluvian school of Anthony Trollope. There is the same profusion of quiet detail in description, conversation, and analysis; the same flat surface and monotonously low tone; the same persistent air of everydayness. Within the convention which Mr. Tagore has adopted he has certain obvious and important merits. Many of his characters are remarkably alive, and the skill with which he makes them grow in subtlety upon the canvas of his book is often admirable. The character of Anandamoyi, the "mother" in the strict, orthodox Hindu household, with her instinctive freedom of mind and wisdom, is perhaps the best in the book, sketched with minute, delicate touches. "If you do that," someone says to her, "won't you get into trouble?" "I may, but what of that?" she replies. "Even if there is a slight fuss, one has only to remain quiet for a little, and it will all be forgotten." The more complicated character of Sucharita is also very good, and in Binoy Mr. Tagore has achieved what very few novelists have attempted successfully, a *jeune premier* who is not merely a lay figure.

When I come to Gora, the central figure in the book, I feel far more doubtful. And the novel stands or falls as a work of art with Gora and his story. Gora has been brought up as the son of Anandamoyi and her husband Krishnadayal, an ultra-strict Hindu. He himself sees in orthodox Hinduism and a revolt against Westernization the only means of saving India. His nationalism and idealism are both intense. But he is really neither an Indian, nor a Hindu, nor a Brahmin; he is the son of an Irishman, and his father was killed and his mother had died in the Mutiny. He is in ignorance of his parentage until the end of the book, and his position over and over again, particularly in his conversations with Anandamoyi, reminds one of that of Oedipus. The theme is a fine one, and occasionally Mr. Tagore seems to be able to grasp and use it in order to mould his book into a work of art. But these moments of complete mastery are, I think, rare. The character of Gora is not a complete failure, but it is not a sufficiently solid success. It tends to become at the critical moments slightly melodramatic, and this has a peculiarly fatal effect upon the texture of Mr. Tagore's work.

LEONARD WOOLF.

REVIEWS

THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE.

The Elizabethan Stage. By E. K. CHAMBERS. Four vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press. £3 10s.)

"THOROUGH" is a motto which at one time had unpopular associations in politics; and which at another met with some mild ridicule when it was assigned to the novel-hero who crushed (literally) a silver cup on his deathbed to show a rival that he'd better not take liberties. But in another kind of literature—that of researched and recorded knowledge—there is probably no better; and there is hardly any literary historian who can more justly claim it at the present day than Mr. E. K. Chambers. His "Mediæval Stage," a Preface to this—both being (as the author says with some quaintness) prefaces to a "little book about Shakespeare" which is not written yet—established years ago the fact of his thoroughness and also of his possession of that faculty of management which does not always or often accompany thoroughness. There is still a gap left between the contents even of these volumes, which do not reach the closing of the theatres, and the handling of kindred subjects which has been taken up by Mr. Allardyce Nicoll; and it is sincerely to be hoped that Mr. Chambers himself will fill it. It may be an ungracious thing to say, but there are so many little books about Shakespeare already, and, though we should be sorry to do without some of them, we should look with such equanimity on the disappearance of the others!

Of the value of this work itself, however, there can be no two opinions among persons who possess already the knowledge requisite for appreciation and the wits to use that knowledge. There is no strictly literary criticism, and it is not wanted: indeed, it is much better away, for opinion mixes very badly with fact on such occasions as this. But the supply of fact is marvellously abundant and singularly well arranged. The book is, in fact, a sort of *Thesaurus Rei Dramaticæ* for the noblest and most interesting period of the English theatre; and there is hardly a section of any one of its four volumes which would not give ample material for a "quarterly" review of the old thirty-page kind. The most interesting of all to the present writer is the largest—that on "Plays and Playwrights," which fills three-fifths of the third volume and nearly a hundred pages of the fourth—the rest of this last being filled with Appendices, mostly documentary, of almost every imaginable kind. But it must not be imagined that Mr. Chambers abuses the very easily abusable Appendix-habit. He is not in the least afraid of footnotes, and you are never, unless when it is necessary, bidden to rummage somewhere else for information which might perfectly well be given you where you are reading. But this "Playwright" section, under alphabetically arranged headings, is a model of its kind—short but adequate biography with no guesswork; equally adequate bibliography and catalogue of plays with all important known particulars concerning their appearances, the companies that acted them, &c. Mr. Chambers's rigid system makes one occasionally wish for completion with authors and plays of authors not positively dated within his period; but every good thing has to be paid for somehow. The only other sadness connected with these four hundred pages is that they make one long more than ever for that complete collection of the texts of the Elizabethan Drama itself to which they would make such admirable introductory matter, and to which every new partial collection, however good it may be in itself, interposes a certain obstacle, while it leaves us with unwanted duplicates and unfilled gaps.

There is plenty for other tastes, however, and perhaps nothing that any well-informed and cultivated taste will find superfluous. The Court; the Control of the Stage; the Companies—Boy and Adult; Individual Actors; the Actual Theatres; their Staging as well as that at the Court; the printing of Plays, and other things, all have their separate Books (sometimes running to hundreds of pages) and chapters. And the whole uniformly manifests those two excellences of research and of arrangement which have been

already noted. The merest "general reader" will find plenty of stuff—for instance, the chapter on Pageantry—which will suit him well enough: while there cannot be very many honest scholars who, while recognizing many things that they know already, will not acknowledge that these known things carry with them a mighty train of things previously unknown. The range of Mr. Chambers's inquiries, not merely into his direct subjects, but into all manner of things in books and MSS. connected therewith, is really rather marvellous.

But there have been brazen-bowelled fact-grubbers not seldom; and yet they have been spoilt by want of wit, by incapacity of arrangement; and, worst of all, by a curious admixture of positive vice in the literary sense. You do not, of course, often come across such a case as that of Collier, who combined real scholarship and genuine interest in literature with positive forgery. But the less outrageous, if perhaps even more pestiferous, vice of guesswork and fantastic theorizing is commoner than ever. It is the well-known besetting sin of the usual Shakespearian commentator. On the other hand, though Mr. Chambers does not, of course, preclude himself from reasonable induction and deduction, he confines himself strictly to them. Somebody has said, perhaps too sentimentally, that "I love you" are the three great words of life. One might say with the strictest practical sense that "You mayn't suppose" are the three or three and a half great words of critical and historical literature. There will be found no violation of this canon in "The Elizabethan Stage." Of the abundance of solid and well-arranged matter that will be found there is really nothing more to say in small compass but "Take and read."

GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

EJACULATIONS BEFORE REVIEWING.

At Dawn. By The Hon. EVAN MORGAN. (Kegan Paul. 6s.)

An Offering of Swans. By OLIVER GOGARTY. (Dublin: Cuala Press.)

The Death of Itylus. By EDWARD GLYN-JONES. (Grant Richards. 5s.)

The Wise Men Come to Town. By WILLIAM JEFFREY. (Gowans & Gray. 3s. 6d.)

Frogs at Twilight. By HELEN NICHOLSON (Madame de Zglinitzki). (Elkin Mathews. 4s.)

I REALLY must start reading these books one at a time and from cover to cover. My contemporary, the compiler of "Shorter Notices: Poetry," for the "Times Literary Supplement," though bound by fate to review only those volumes which the editor considers as coming low in the hierarchy of letters, never seems to get soured; he reprimands only in the blandest terms—"These poems are not without a certain charm . . . limpid freshness . . . excellent verse in the school of . . . craftsmanship . . . ambitious theme," and so on.

Myself, I get torn between fairness to my authors and fairness to my readers; how to recommend the former to the latter without either dishonesty or dullness. A stack of shorter-notice books at my elbow makes me restless, ribald, irrelevant, and, since unfortunately the poets cannot accompany their poems in person, I have no check on my good manners, nobody to make sure even that I cut all the pages. Well now, to work: where shall we begin? Here's Evan Morgan's latest collection; he's been four years at it. I wonder what progress he has been making with his rhymes and rhythms? Ah, a portrait! Does he really look so young still? He must be thirty by now, and, talking of Progress, here's a poem of that title:—

"Was it in vain, this clash of arms titanic?
Was it for nought philosophers of yore
Oiled the machine of life? Did each mechanic
Give from his mighty store . . ."

"Ask me no more, good bard, ask me no more." . . .

Well, it looks all right, but I wish he hadn't entered on this competition with Robert Nichols as to who can in a single volume dedicate the most poems to the most distinguished people. "To Augustus John," "to Eugene Goossens," "to Alfred Noyes," "to W. B. Yeats," "to Oliver

Gogarty" (the Irish Senator and Poet), "to Aldous Huxley," "to G. K. C." I know they are his friends all right, but it seems taking a mean advantage of Nichols not only to dedicate pieces to two separate Roman Cardinals, but to dedicate a poem (on the subject of . . . loneliness) to his rival Nichols, to whom modesty forbids Nichols from addressing one himself. I'll put "At Dawn" aside for awhile. Meanwhile, this next book is, curiously enough, from the pen of Doctor Oliver Gogarty and prefaced by W. B. Yeats. How these poets stick together! Yeats explains the title. Gogarty was being taken off one night to be shot by masked men in the streets of Dublin. He contrived to create a diversion by shamming illness, then suddenly leaping into the Liffey—"O Liffey, Father Liffey, To whom we Irish pray, Assist me for a jiffey"—escaped, and afterwards, as a thank-offering, presented that famous but unwholesome stream with a brace of swans. "Well swum, Senator; well swim, swans!"

I like Gogarty's humour:—

TO A BOON COMPANION.

"If medals were ordained for drinks
Or soft communings with a minx
Or being at your ease belated,
By Heavens, you'd be decorated,
And not Alcmena's chesty son
Have room to put your ribbons on."

"Chesty"! Good! A fool would have written "stalwart" or "brawny." Then there is a lyric which Yeats recommends:—

"Begone, sweet Ghost! O get you gone!
Or haunt me with your body on."

I like it too, only the word "on" joins more naturally with "haunt" than with "body," and puzzles at first. Query: Can a ghost be said to have a body on?

Glyn-Jones, Edward; that's the ambilingual Glyn-Jones, isn't it, with such a reputation in Wales? If so, I wonder if that's on the strength of his Welsh poems, because I don't think much of his English. Reminds me, somehow, of the old jest: "This hanimal, sir, is hamphiborous, which means Can't live alive on the land and dies as soon as hever he touches the water," but I can hardly quote that in a review.

"The Death of Itylus" is a drama described as:—

Place: *Thebes*.

Time: *Prior to the Homeric Age*.

In it Glyn-Jones makes Aëdon say:—

"Patient Humanity
Has quintessential justness at its core . . .
Come, we'll have some wine then. Here is a chair
Was sat upon by Achilles when grief
Weighted and bound him, like a sun-slaked flower
Waiting Patroclus' death."

Quintessential? Achilles? Another poem is addressed "To a Lady Who Would not Read Poetry." I take it that these anachronisms worried her after a bit: yes, I know Shakespeare made worse ones, but come!

Who's this? None other than William Jeffrey, who sings:—

"Of the golden lion
Magnificent in might,
The roaring mountain-nurtured lion
Magnificent in fight.
His golden feet upon the hill
Go walking day by day;
Unnumbered thoughts his being fill,
But no word does he say."

Not one word, mark you, for all his roaring!

On the other hand, according to the authoress of "Frogs in Amber":—

"The frogs are kinder, on the tired heart
Their humble wisdom sheds a healing balm.
All's well, they reassure us with their calm.
You're one of us, of the great whole a part—
So one with God."

I see I have misquoted. The title should be "Bees at Twilight," or rather, "Frogs at Twilight." The lynx-eyed and embittered Mr. F. L. Lucas will be rapping me over the knuckles again this week if I'm not more careful. Last time he thought I called Mrs. Hemans a Victorian, though her body was already mouldering in the grave in 1835; when what I really meant was that her soul still went marching along.

But we digress from frogs and from Madame Zglinitzki:—

"Moods, moods, moods,
Life is just a round of them.
Black moods,
Slack moods,
Moods of dreamy still delight,
Moods in which you're full of fight. . . ."

"Fore God," as Cassio once remarked to a drunken Moor, "Fore God, a more excellent song than the other!" But I really must start reading these books properly now, and then write something about them for THE NATION AND THE ATHENÆUM, something decent and fair, and serious and scholarly.

ROBERT GRAVES.

POLAND AND EUROPE.

Poland and Peace. By Count ALEXANDER SKRZYNSKI, Former Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs. (Allen & Unwin. 6s.)

THE title of this book does it an injustice. Any prospective English reader who was at all upon his guard would naturally assume that it meant "Poland and Propaganda," whereas it is really much more genuinely concerned with Peace than could reasonably be inferred from the addition of that word in the title to the name of the author's country. True, there are glimpses of the cloven hoof. For instance, a Hungarian of whatever colour would be startled to hear that in 1919-20 "Hungary had just been freed from Bolshevism by the generous initiative of the Roumanians"; nor would a Lithuanian find comfort in the following reference to Vilna: "All the difficulties which arose were such as had to do only with the fact that the League of Nations, having to decide upon a boundary dispute between its two members, Poland and Lithuania, found itself on several occasions in a difficult position. To-day against the existing state of affairs Lithuania alone is protesting." What self-restraint on Poland's part to maintain a dignified silence with Vilna in her pocket! But, then, France—Poland's great ensample and ally—is contriving, with equal moral grandeur, not to protest against the occupation of the Ruhr!

It would be very unfair, however, to suggest that these quotations are characteristic of the book, for Count Skrzynski's book, for the most part, is (happily) not in itself characteristic of that depressing category of war and post-war literature to which it belongs. The author possesses two cardinal virtues. He is frank in setting out his country's difficulties and shortcomings, and he never attacks those of his fellow-countrymen who belong to other parties than his own—not even by implication, and this although Polish party politics are infected with that East-European mentality in which the political opponent at home is an object of even deadlier hatred than the member of a neighbouring nation.

Count Skrzynski's frankness has its reward, for he succeeds in giving the English reader a vivid impression of the appalling difficulties under which Poland has laboured since her rebirth. She starts with the problem of having to fuse together three groups of Poles who for the past century and a half have been subjects of three great multinational empires which differed from one another in almost everything except their common determination to keep their respective Polish subjects in isolation from one another. Before she has solved this internal problem of her own national life, she finds herself, or elects to make herself, mistress of non-Polish minorities amounting to very nearly 50 per cent. of her Polish citizen body. Of these, the Germans, Ukrainians, White Russians, and Lithuanians are fragments of larger national groups from which they are divided by an arbitrary political and military frontier, but not by any natural boundary, while the Jews are ubiquitous in the towns, in which—in certain of the eastern provinces—they constitute something like nine-tenths of the population. As to the present frontier, only 1½ per cent. of it is seaboard, and, perhaps, 12 per cent. coincides with the mountain barrier of the Carpathians. Elsewhere it is merely a line of wooden posts (not even sanctified by tradition) across an open plain, a plain which merges on one side into Germany and on the other into Russia. This plain had the misfortune to be the eastern zone of the operations in the European War; and owing to the mobility of the Eastern Front and the systematic devastation practised

by the Russian Army on its retreat during 1915, the destruction, though not so intensive, has probably been greater and less quickly reparable in the aggregate than the destruction in Belgium and Northern France. Meanwhile, the young Polish manhood of military age was conscripted to fight on opposite sides in the grouping of forces, for causes which were in no case their own; and the nation was further profoundly divided in sentiment on the question whether they should give their voluntary support to Russia or to the Central Powers, not for motives of idealism (which were ruled out by the circumstances) but on the principle of enlightened self-interest. The territory of Poland had thus been thoroughly ravaged and the population decimated before the downfall of all three oppressors unexpectedly made it free. But, with the restoration of her freedom, Poland's modern troubles were only just beginning. The overthrow of the three empires was followed by the annihilation of their currencies, which meant that the entire savings of the Polish people, invested in German, Austrian, or Russian securities, were wiped out of existence at a moment when Poland desperately needed capital in order to repair the ravages of war and to adjust her life to the new conditions of unity and independence. But, for her, even the war was not yet over. She found herself next door to Bolshevik Russia; and the fact that some of the biggest estates held by Polish landowners lay in the White Russian and Ukrainian territories confounded the social and territorial grounds of antagonism between the two countries. When it is realized that only about 20 per cent. of the population of contemporary Poland are property owners, and that the remainder belong to a more or less embittered rural and urban proletariat, the hostile proximity of Soviet Russia will be seen to have been—and to remain—a problem by which any State, young or old, united or disunited, might well be appalled. All these difficulties and many more are set forth frankly by Count Skrzynski himself. He has the laudable habit of offering more information than palliative comment; and the book closes with a not unconvincing definition of militarism (p. 142), and an open-eyed recognition of the British attitude of mind towards Poland since the close of the war.

ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE.

NEW NOVELS.

Island of the Innocent. By GRANT OVERTON. (Cyldendal. 7s. 6d.)

Nowhere Else in the World. By JAY WILLIAM HUDSON. (Appleton. 7s. 6d.)

The High Place. By JAMES BRANCH CABELL. (The Bodley Head. 7s. 6d.)

The Comely Lass. By THOMAS MOULT. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

The House with the Green Shutters. By GEORGE DOUGLAS BROWN. (Melrose. 7s. 6d.)

Two of these novels, "Island of the Innocent" and "Nowhere Else in the World," belong to a type which evidently recommends itself to the American public. Their protagonists, a woman in the first case, and in the second a man, attain an idealistic haven after many false starts and a rough passage through the distractions and illusions of early life. In workmanship the two books differ considerably; Mr. Grant Overton affects an elusive elliptical style, while Mr. Hudson in thought, word, and deed clings fast to chronology and sequence. Dace Sherril's preoccupations are moral; her peace is threatened by the thought of the extremes to which the men she has "encouraged" are, in their several agonies, likely to go. For Stephen Kent the problem of life is more impersonal, more ethical (it has a savour of metaphysics), in fact a matter of sifting aspirations rather than of examining regrets. But in both is apparent an effort to trace the progress of a soul enamoured of perfection, strongly individualistic, bent on learning from experience, impatient of guidance and control. This great thesis, unfortunately, never "comes alive" in the authors' hands. We know—indeed, with the wealth of reference, how could we fail to know?—that it is there; but we do not feel its presence fusing and shaping the mass of detail which, in "Nowhere Else in the World," seems part of the megalomania which animates the book. Mr. Hudson ultimately convinces his unwilling hero that megalomania and idealism are one. The bigness of Chicago, the bigness of its civic buildings, the unparalleled congestion

of its traffic, the supreme uproar of its railways, inspire several laudatory paragraphs that are not untinged with irony; but the author is off his guard, one suspects, and writes from the heart when, after Stephen Kent's mysterious accident, he bursts out:—

"There are ninety-two hospitals in Chicago. In one area on the West side, there is to be found the greatest group of hospitals in the world"

"Island of the Innocent" is a much better book. It has real characters, not elongated, indeterminate shadows. The portrait of Norman, the malcontent, the gaol-bird, Dace Sherril's sinister, self-appointed protector, undoubtedly has life. But what Mr. Grant Overton does not make one feel is the full force of his heroine's predicament; the incidents, excellent in themselves, are multiplied, but they do not accumulate and adhere. And the reason for this must be that the spiritual background of America has yet to be discovered. Clear enough in the time of Hawthorne, it has ever since steadily lost outline and significance. Almost all important American novelists have their substitutes; but the substitute is their own invention, a projection of themselves. Thus, in its moral issues, each novel is like a game played according to one's own rules, bewildering and unsatisfactory except to the few initiates.

Mr. Cabell's rules also are peculiar to himself. Upon a framework of humorous disillusion he hangs an alluring assortment of glittering and forbidden fruits. The very motive which prompted Stephen Kent to forsake France, his conviction that the good life could be better achieved elsewhere, impels Mr. Cabell to lay his scene in France. It is France of the early eighteenth century, seen through a dream and peopled with necromancers, disreputable saints, demons, and angels. Less symbolical than much of Mr. Cabell's work, it is even richer in the special kind of reference and innuendo with which his readers are familiar. Enjoyment of the book depends largely upon one's appetite for such highly seasoned fare; it is not a pure taste, esthetically or morally, although Mr. Cabell's style, burdened as it is by artifice and preciosity, always has distinction.

Sentiment sinking to sentimentality is the mark of Mr. Moul's melancholy romance of the moorlands and the sea. Where, one wonders, does he find the prototypes of his fanciful farmers and ecstatic fishermen? The language of love is always on their lips, and their persistent lyricism serves to take the edge off some excellent character-drawing. Mr. Moul sows with the sack; he has no lack of invention and resource, and the situation of the girl, robbed in one night of her husband and her son, is moving, and would be tragic if presented in ordinary English or even in a consistent dialect. Unfortunately, Mr. Moul diversifies the speech of the Peak District and the East Riding with variants and provincialisms garnered from Ireland, Somerset, and the Bible.

It was, Mr. Melrose's memoir says, as a counterblast to such rose-coloured accounts of the countryside that G. D. Brown wrote "The House with the Green Shutters." Only one of its characters, and that one so minor that he is known simply by the name of his calling, the baker, makes an appeal to our affection. The others inspire varying degrees of distaste. Subject to that condition, they have infinite variety. It is extraordinary how their personalities survive and even take life from the doom that threatens and finally overtakes them. In less skilful hands the fourfold tragedy would, of its own quality, efface finer distinctions and usurp the stage; here it is a logical fulfilment, a personal visitation, owing little of its effect to sensation, heightening rather than submerging preceding values. Mr. Melrose has given a vivid account of this author, celebrated, like Emily Brontë, for a single book, and not unworthy to be compared with her.

L. P. HARTLEY.

PHILOSOPHY AND PHYSICS.

Substance and Function and Einstein's Theory of Relativity. By ERNST CASSIRER. Authorized Translation by W. C. SWABEY and M. C. SWABEY. (Open Court Publishing Co. 18s.)

THE progress of physical science during the present century has been so rapid that one has hardly had time to pause and consider what it is all about. The man of science may be content with this state of affairs. He, at any

rate, is getting on, and that is very satisfactory. But he is, though often unconsciously, influenced by the philosophic ideas which are current at the time. Would Newton have believed in absolute space and absolute time if he had not been under the influence of the English Platonists? Philosophy, on the other hand, cannot, or, at any rate, should not, neglect the results attained by science. The Theory of Relativity must sooner or later have an immense effect on philosophy. But, in England at present, there is a harmful divorce between physics and philosophy. The English physicist has always had a passion for mechanical models; he was not content to say that certain properties or happenings were what he called ether; he liked to think of an ether which was as elastic as steel, or was like a jelly or some other familiar object. In fact, he was under the influence of Aristotle, and wanted some matter or substance to which he could attribute certain properties, but which was something different from these properties.

But the influence of Aristotle is gradually waning. His "Physics" and Plato's "Timeus" were for more than 1,500 years the two standard books on physical science. Next to Euclid's "Elements," they were the most successful textbooks ever written. But for some centuries Aristotle and Plato have no longer been taken seriously as men of science. Aristotle was fond of classification, like a zoologist who collects beetles or molluscs. His logic is the logic of classes. This till recently held the field, but since the publication of Whitehead and Russell's "Principia Mathematica," it has been plain to everyone (except, perhaps, to some of the professional teachers of philosophy and logic) that the logic of relations is the really important thing. Euclid, too, is out of date. Nearly one hundred years ago (February 12th, 1826) in the Hall of the University of Kazan, Lobachevski gave his address which disposed of Euclid's axiom of parallels. Philosophers were slow to learn that Euclid might not apply to the actual world, although one would naturally have thought that their business was to hunt out and expose the unfounded assumptions of science. There were exceptions. Berkeley did criticize Newton, and was not convinced of absolute space by an experiment of a rotating bucket of water; but this criticism could not succeed in the face of the successes of Celestial Mechanics. But, at the present time, both Euclidean Geometry and Newtonian Mechanics have had their day. Geometry, mechanics, electro-magnetism and gravitation have been fused into one whole—the study of the properties of the space-time continuum.

English philosophy pays little attention to these matters. Aristotle and Plato are still taught by people who do not appear to be well acquainted with the mathematical apparatus required by the theory of relativity, and who seem to have acquired their knowledge from popular books rather than from the original writings of Einstein and Weyl. This is a lamentable state of affairs. What should we think of a professor of Russian literature who did not know Russian, but had read a few articles in English on Tolstoi and Chekhov? There is no excuse for this philosophic ignorance. Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant were well abreast with the scientific knowledge of their time. Ignorance of science has not always been considered a qualification for a philosopher. And the loss is not all on the side of philosophy. Men of science usually do not know what they are talking about. Inevitably most of them tend to be rather narrow specialists, and to devote much time to experiment. They need philosophic criticism from persons who have taken the trouble to learn something of mathematics and physics.

On the Continent of Europe things have been better. The writings of H. Poincaré, P. Duhem, Ernst Mach, and others have shown how men of science can criticize the assumptions and methods of science. Indeed, Mach (so Einstein thinks) would have hit upon the special theory of relativity, if he had been a young man when the Michelson-Morley experiment showed that the velocity of light was constant and did not depend on the velocity of the observer. But if Englishmen will not philosophize seriously they can, and should, read the works of foreigners; and if they will not or cannot learn languages, these works ought to be made accessible in translations. It is, therefore, an excellent thing that two of the books of the well-known philosopher Professor Ernst Cassirer should be translated. "Substance and Function" appeared in 1910; "Einstein's Theory of Relativity" in 1921. One's first thought on reading the

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former is that the rapid progress of science has already made it slightly out of date; it was written before the publication of "Principia Mathematica" or the formulation of the general theory of relativity. But it is all the more interesting to see how the author is striving for truth in the right direction. We must no longer be dominated by the notion of substance and attribute. Our physical laws have to be stated in the form of differential equations—we do not know what these mean; all we know is that experimentally they are true. Hertz put the matter very clearly when he said that Maxwell's theory of electricity was Maxwell's equations.

The second book—that on Relativity—shows that Professor Cassirer has made a serious study of the subject. What English philosophical book would contain so many references to original scientific papers? But again science has gone ahead, and he will, let us hope, write a further book to deal with the latest developments of the theory, which include electro-magnetism as well as gravitation.

As a Kantian, Professor Cassirer is chiefly interested in the effect of the new knowledge on Kantian philosophy. The discovery of non-Euclidean geometry was a serious blow; for Kant held that Euclid's axioms were unquestionably true. The theory of relativity, however, is rather a support to Kant; and those who are specially addicted to his philosophy will find Professor Cassirer's book both interesting and valuable.

The translation is well done and has the author's approval. English readers may be puzzled by a few Americanisms, such as "inert mass" for inertial mass, "heavy mass" for gravitational mass, "exponent of the refraction" for index of refraction; and the word "haptical" might be replaced by "tactual" or "tactile"; these are not blemishes but mere differences of language. In some ways it is a pity that the two books should be published in one volume, for there may be readers who will want only to read the book on Relativity; yet perhaps it is just for that reason that the two books are published together, because the earlier book leads up to the ideas of the later. If they induce philosophers to read a little science and men of science to think a little about philosophy, they will serve a useful purpose.

"POOR HONEST MEN."

The Smugglers. By Lord TEIGNMOUTH and C. G. HARPER. 2 vols. (Cecil Palmer. 42s.)

SOME people collect stamps, others collect Dresden china shepherdesses, or Toby jugs, and one, at any rate, collects matchboxes; but Lord Teignmouth and Mr. Harper have a more exciting hobby. For years they have collected smugglers, from Admiralty records, from living testimony, and from the evidence of tombstones in ancient seaside places. In these two volumes they share the best things in their collection with the public. Here, for the first time, set down with the impartial justice of history, we may read the biographies of those heroes, Jack Rattenbury, George Ransley, the fairly patriotic Johnson, and the occasionally pious Harry Carter, and excellent reading they make.

Smuggling, it seems, is as old as the first civilization; Mr. Harper thinks it must have infuriated the coastal authorities of Carthage. In England we began in earnest in Edward III.'s time with the "Owlers," who smuggled wool out of England to be manufactured abroad, and have continued, more or less, to the present day. But the eighteenth century was the famous time, and Kent and Sussex the famous places. The history of the most respectable little seaside towns, now known mainly as nice places to take the children to in the summer, will not really bear research. There is not much romance in the work of the celebrated Hawkhurst gang and their contemporaries, but tales of cruel murders, spiteful revenges, cold-blooded "informing," and, now and then, but not so often as it would have been had not the jury been sympathetic to, or afraid of, the prisoners, the gallows. In fact, quite a Newgate-Calendar atmosphere. The guinea smuggling to France during the Napoleonic wars leaves a better taste. The sea-smugglers were more sporting than their confederates on land, though hardly patriotic, and it is, at this distance, amusing to know that Napoleon's soldiers were paid in

smuggled gold from English banks. Galleys of forty feet or more in length, rowed by twenty-six or thirty-six men, were built for "running the gold." Besides being inconspicuous, the galleys had the great advantage of being able to lay a course straight into the wind's eye on being pursued, which meant that the Revenue cutter, unless she began the chase by being dead to windward, was left hopelessly behind. The construction of these galleys was forbidden by the Government, so they were built on Calais pier. It would be interesting to know a little of the French side of the business, of the strange amalgamation of languages used, and whether French and English smugglers intermarried, and so made it not so much an international as a family affair.

Of course, everyone was in the business. Sometimes the parson knew, sometimes he just "lent" the church, and on such occasions a cask would find its way to the vicarage porch with the touching inscription "For our Parson." Sometimes country people found casks hidden, and, not daring to inform, still saw no reason why they should not benefit by the discovery. So they would mark a tub or two, shyly, with a chalk cross, and those tubs remained when the rest vanished. A vivid picture of the discipline of the times is created by the description of an occasion when three hundred people assembled on the beach in broad daylight to meet a consignment.

The book is illustrated with demure drawings of such rendezvous as the "Red Lion," the "Green Man," and still existing houses of smugglers by the authors, and "fancy" pictures by Mr. Paul Hardy. It was a good idea to put in the epitaphs. Here is perhaps the saddest. Robert Trotman came into fatal conflict with the Revenue Officers, near Poole, in 1765:—

"A little tea, one leaf I did not steal,
For guiltless bloodshed I to God appeal;
Put tea in one scale, human blood in t'other,
And think what 'tis to slay a harmless brother."

A. M. RITCHIE.

THREE BIOGRAPHIES.

The Life of Sir William Crookes. By E. E. FOURNIER D'ALBE. (Fisher Unwin. 25s.)

Ego. By Lord CASTLETOWN. (Murray. 10s. 6d.)

Memories. By Viscount LONG OF WRAXALL. (Hutchinson. 24s.)

MR. FOURNIER has written an excellent Life of Sir William Crookes, and has placed him vividly before us in a book which is also full—if anything, a little too full—of scientific information. Crookes was a man of the most varied interests, which led him to the most varied activities; he tested soda-water-syphons, exploited manure, discovered a new element, tried to make money out of gold-mining, and finally devoted his attention to electric lighting. He was always very methodical, and in his diary of a voyage to photograph an eclipse we find the entry: "Anecdotes. The effect on bucolic mind of photographer changing a plate in middle of a field, having enveloped his head and waist in a large yellow bag. Appearance that of a gigantic yellow puff-ball on a black stalk." This was in 1870. Interest had been already aroused in psychical research, and on the same voyage: "Tyndall came up and told me he had seen Coleman a few days ago in a Turkish bath, both naked. Coleman commenced spiritualism at once." Crookes's attention had been drawn to the subject on the death of his brother, and later on he announced that he was going to investigate it scientifically. In spite of incredibly inefficient precautions he was convinced, and his desire to believe in immortality was satisfied. But there was severe criticism from scientific quarters, and he soon gave up his inquiries, being careful of his scientific reputation, and not a little vain (the pun was typical when, on being made a "simple Knight Bachelor, like any little local mayor," he chose as his device "Ubi Crux Ibi Lux"). He was an astute, but not a very successful, business man; he was always embarking on vast schemes, which led to nothing in the end, and in more ways than one he came to grief in "the shadowy realm between Known and Unknown, which for me has always had peculiar temptations."

It is a long way from Mornington Road to Upper Ossory, where Lord Castletown sits surrounded by trophies of many a hard-fought struggle. He is a splendid example of a fine

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Rheumatism, Gout, Neuralgia, &c.—These distressing complaints are caused by an excess of Uric Acid in the blood. Vegetables being rich in Alkaline and other Salts, such as Potassium Sodium, Magnesium Calcium, Sulphur, &c., will purify the blood, neutralize the acids and expel them from the system. As Constipation is nearly always pre-existent in these cases, Vegetables will effect the cure. But bear in mind the Vegetables must be so cooked that all the Valuable Organic Salts are fully conserved. Constipation is the foul and aggravating cause of most of the complaints and diseases from which we suffer, and can only be cured by Natural Remedies.

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old Irish gentleman, and he looks back over a long and jolly life. He soon discovered what fun it was to set hawks at magpies, and he never lost the tastes which this discovery whetted. He was a soldier, and served against the "Gippies" in 1881 and fought in the Boer War; but the happiest times of his life were when "we used to get days all through the winter of 120 to 150 ducks, teal, and widgeon," when "thousands of pheasants were killed," when he brought down an elk in Sweden after forty-eight hours' chase, and when, with his Colonel-in-Chief, "we had a glorious time and killed . . ." He was a great traveller; he went to Persia, where he had some splendid sport; he visited India and Morocco, and in America there was a day in the Rockies "full of enjoyment, health, and intimate communing with Nature and her wonders." While he was in America he went on an expedition to hunt buffalo, but there is a note of sadness here; he sees the herd in his mind's eye: "It was a wonderful scene, and one could almost cry to think that not one of those splendid beasts is now alive." But never mind; on the next page: "We rode gaily into the herd . . . galloped up to a young cow, one merciful shot laying her low."

Lord Long hunted, too, but only in the last chapter of his "Memories"; it was his "lighter side." The rest is a parliamentary history of the last fifty years. It is all very peaceful and magnificent; every statesman who ever held office was brilliant and noble, whatever party he belonged to, and when the Coalition Government comes on the scene, Lord Long can hardly find words in which to express his admiration. There were difficult times, of course, especially over the muzzling of dogs, and the drafting of the Conscription Bill; but everyone was so kind and considerate that work was a pleasure. It is an impersonal account of what happened, and Lord Long vanishes behind the great buildings in Westminster, loses all individual characteristics, and only emerges occasionally in the colourless garb of a loyal servant of Crown and Party. There is no room for human passions, and only one weakness can be detected: Lord Long cannot understand the German mentality, on which he finds a "lurid light" thrown by the sinking of the ships at Scapa Flow. "Why," he asks, "why were they not willing that those splendid ships, which had done them no harm, should go to the bottom intact? Were they afraid that we should raise them, and did they determine to render them useless?" As we close the book, we cannot help sighing with Mr. Chesterton:—

"If I were wise and good and rich and strong—
Fond impious thought, if I were Walter Long."

S. S.

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY.

Two Gentlemen of China. By Lady Hosie. (Seeley & Service. 21s.)

Ashanti. By Capt. R. S. RATTRAY, M.B.E. (Oxford University Press. 25s.)

Among Wild Tribes of the Amazons. By CHARLES W. DOMVILLE-FIFE. (Seeley & Service. 21s.)

It might be laid down as an anthropological axiom that, if you knew a man's personal character, his social code, and his religious beliefs and ritual, you could tell, within very narrow limits, how he would behave in any given set of circumstances. Hence as our knowledge of foreign civilizations grows it should enable us to avoid those misunderstandings that embitter international relations and make the government of "backward" peoples so haphazard a business.

Lady Hosie's study of family life in China was written at the instigation of her father, Professor Soothill, and with the cordial consent of the heads of the two patrician Chinese families in whose homes she was a welcome guest. Nothing more intimate or explanatory has been written of China and its people. So closely did Lady Hosie come to know her friends that she was accepted on the footing of a relative, calling the heads of the families Uncle and Aunt and being treated by them almost as one of their own children, with whom, in turn, she mixed as a sister. Those who know anything of China will also know that to have thus penetrated into the home life of so reserved a people presupposes in Lady Hosie a sympathy with the civilization of China almost unparalleled in a foreigner. Lady Hosie, in a curiously simple and sober style, which at times suggests that she is

thinking in Chinese, gives us a series of character-sketches that help us to know Kung Ta Jen, the upright judge and fine gentleman, Kung Tai Tai, his imperious, shrewd, and kindly wife, and their sons and daughters, as we know our own friends. As Kung Tai Tai once said of Lady Hosie: "She is good and kind, just as if she were Chinese," so we, too, can say as we put down the book: "These are brave and cheerful people, just as if they were English."

There would seem at first sight to be little in common between Lady Hosie's simple narrative of her social experiences in China and Capt. Rattray's systematic investigation into the anthropology of Ashanti. Nevertheless, they are informed by the same spirit of sympathy and fortified by the same first-hand knowledge. Capt. Rattray tells us that the present volume contains the results of the first year's work of the new Anthropological Department in Ashanti, but there went to the winning of these results long residence in the country, an intimate knowledge of the language and the people, and a sympathy transparent enough to break down that barrier of suspicion which the anthropologist often finds impregnable. Readers of this book will readily understand that, had the white intruder into the Gold Coast understood the nature of the Ashanti culture as Capt. Rattray understands it, our relations with this most interesting people might have been pacific from the beginning. It is, indeed, acknowledged that Capt. Rattray's report on the "Golden Stool," a symbol which "has directly involved the British Government and British taxpayer in two costly little wars," not only averted another serious outbreak, but led to a much better feeling between the Ashanti people and the Gold Coast Administration. The professional anthropologist will find the chapters which deal with the Ashanti laws of exogamy and inheritance full of new and valuable matter. The Ashanti law of real property is curiously like our own, a further proof that the human mind reacts in the same way to the same stimulus, no matter how widely separated in culture peoples may be.

If Mr. Domville-Fife's descriptions of the primitive and warlike tribes which he encountered in his expeditions up little-frequented tributaries of the Amazon are rather those of an enlightened traveller than of a scientific observer, his book is still welcome, for it helps us to understand the problems that have to be solved before the last great unexplored area of the world can be opened up and developed. The aborigines of tropical America, without whose assistance the development of the great forest swamps of Brazil cannot be systematically undertaken, have not been encouraged in the past to trust the white man, and it is satisfactory to know that the Brazilian authorities, by the establishment of Indian Stations in the forest areas, are endeavouring to dissipate the distrust and enmity of these wild peoples. Mr. Domville-Fife has secured a valuable series of photographs, and his story of his experiences among the tribes makes exciting reading.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Things that Were. By S. COOPER SCOTT. (Christophers. 12s. 6d.)

If anybody should assert that only eventful lives can be interesting, Canon Cooper Scott here confutes them. His tale is of the plainest. He was in a bank; he was a London curate in the 'seventies; he became vicar of St. John's, Chester, in 1875; and there his story, which fills over three hundred pages, ceases. He never met a great man or took part in a celebrated event. On the other hand, he knew infinite numbers of costermongers and attended innumerable school treats. He collected enough money to build a church; once he went to a City dinner and was bored; once he failed to see the Shah and made no further effort to see him. Nevertheless this plain tale has two outstanding merits. First he makes us realize the absorbing interest of real life when it is set down without effort or affectation, and then, without presumably being aware of it, he conveys a sense of himself, a modest, sagacious, hard-working, very unpretentious man. For genuine interest and amusement, "Things that Were" is worth at least three dozen popular novels.

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By Captain R. S. RATTRAY.
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Glimpses of Authors. By CAROLINE TICKNOR. (Werner Laurie. 15s.)

Miss Ticknor's grandfather, the well-known Boston publisher, left her a legacy of many literary friends, and the entrée of many interesting houses. Some of the famous men had, provokingly enough, died before she met them; but she saw all the Dickens relics, and went to Earl's Court with his family. For obvious reasons, she never knew the great Coleridge, but she met Mr. Ernest Coleridge under the clock in the British Museum. With Lady Ritchie she lunched, and she had tea with the grand-niece of Jane Austen. Experienced readers of memoirs will be able to forestall the amiable and appreciative comments which these entertainments draw forth. Of first-hand information there is not much; but Dickens, it appears, used blue ink because blue ink dries instantly and he had an antipathy to blotting-paper. He also disliked pencils. Again, Jane Austen had a ring, which Miss Ticknor has seen, made of a single large turquoise, in a simple gold setting. In short, there is nothing scandalous, vulgar, or exciting in this kindly book.

Papers on Psycho-Analysis. By ERNEST JONES. Third Edition. (Baillière, Tindall & Cox. 25s.)

Dr. Jones has added five new chapters to his book, and has left out five from the Second Edition. It still contains one of his most important contributions—a paper on the Theory of Symbolism, in which he makes the Psycho-analytic theory of Symbolism both more exact and more plausible. The book also contains several accounts of actual cases with which Dr. Jones has been concerned. The value of clinical descriptions cannot be exaggerated; it is only by means of reference to concrete instances that the formulations of Psycho-Analysis become really intelligible. Among the new papers is one on "The Nature of Auto-Suggestion," which explains the phenomena in terms of Narcissism. This is the most interesting addition to the 1918 volume.

REVIEWS AND MAGAZINES

OUR modern poets—we are sorry to begin in this trying way—are indeed a timid crew. Here is Mr. Masfield, in "English Life," offering Mr. Winston Churchill a beautiful bouquet, but it is in prose. To one who held his glittering march in a world of imagination, rudely clouded with "the obsessions of professional soldiers," the author of "Gallipoli" addresses his thankful song—in prose. It was not always thus: once these confessions of faith occupied poetic premises: and Mr. Churchill in an earlier day would have inspired, for instance,

"Rides on the whirlwind and directs the storm."

Another observer, Mr. David Hannay, supplies a paper upon "The Navy and the Dardanelles," in the "Edinburgh Review," which is a counterblast, its sterner summary certainly not calling for the heroic couplet.

Of poetry in the current reviews a word or two may be allowed. The "London Mercury," with its external hue like George Herbert's rose, angry and brave, suggests yet an inward and spiritual glow; but its verse for February is of no such correspondent vivacity. Mr. E. B. Osborn is among the music-makers, and Mr. Kenneth Hare has five pages to himself. In "English Life," a magazine of many topics and a distinguished production, Mr. Drinkwater communicates nearly 200 lines about God. A fragment of Katherine Mansfield, not, as far as we remember, found in the lately published collection of her Poems, is among the best offerings of the "Adelphi." Then there is a section sacred to "Verse" in the "Transatlantic Review," the miscellany sent forth from Paris by Mr. F. M. Ford; the moderately attuned and languaged "Pelagea" by Mr. A. E. Coppard gives a sweetness to this rather parching corner.

The "Transatlantic Review" (here issued by Messrs. Duckworth) sets out with authoritative blessings. Mr. T. S. Eliot writes, "From the prospectus which you have sent me I take no prescience of antagonism." Mr. Wells salutes an editorial figure, whose name is not shown: "I have always considered you to be one of the greatest poets and one of the greatest editors alive." While this promising periodical

gathers strength, another literary magazine must be written off—"To-Day," the minor usefulness and sociability of whose pages have had seven years of life. However, the chief writers who supplied it are to pass on to the columns of "Life and Letters," in which it is now merged. If, at times, it must seem as though the career of a new literary magazine is a melancholy theme, yet there are still exceptions; the "American Mercury," brought out in January by Mr. H. L. Mencken and Mr. G. J. Nathan, has been reprinted twice or thrice. It is a sober-looking work, and there is plenty of it.

Reminiscences go on their wonted way. In the "Nineteenth Century," Mr. Edward Wakefield brings his "Walks with Thackeray" to an end earlier than one wished. Mr. Arthur Symonds in the "Fortnightly," revelling in the supposed genius of John Addington Symonds, is able to remember the man in such a moment as this: "I said to Symonds that I had invited some of the ballet-girls of the Empire to tea on the following afternoon; I asked him if he would join us. There sprang from his lips, 'Certainly, I shall be most delighted!'" Nor, it is noted, did the great man, some of whose sentences Mr. Symonds quotes as "all but, if not absolutely, creative prose," decline a little hashish to beguile the evening. In the "Edinburgh Review," Mr. Stephen Gwynn portrays Maurice Hewlett, styling his culture "Venetian"; in the "Quarterly," Mr. J. H. Morgan gives specimens of the conversation and characteristics of Lord Morley.

So, after all, there is no occasion for fear. The Labour Government is not so bone-chilling a spectre. Or is Captain E. C. Cox in the "Nineteenth Century" hiding something from us? The "Labour Monthly" is dark and unhappy; it says there is occasion for fear. Mr. MacDonald, he and his worthies, are in this journal's opinion but springes to catch woodcocks, in the manipulation of the bourgeoisie: "this sinister scheme has got to be smashed." In this deficient world it is comforting to know—*vide* "Gallus" in the "Fortnightly"—that even "M. Poincaré is but human"; he too has his fears. Mr. Denis Gwynn in the "Contemporary" writes with confidence of the expected reinstatement of M. Caillaux and M. Malvy. There too Mr. Glasgow, in his record of events, drily hints the lesson of "the Clive episode."

We had our troubles in the war, but, it is thought, we might have had more. The "Edinburgh Review" mentions a proposal which would have added variety to the sports of the soldiery. Suppose an attack in progress. While the ordinary front-line entertainment is audible through the smoke—it were a stratagem—send 300 aeroplanes, each containing fifty smiling soldiers with Lewis guns and their other properties, to land just behind the enemy's heavy batteries. Send these: but don't go. In the same article is a mention of an incident which did not decorate the despatches. One German aeroplane dropped bombs at Audruicq in the summer of 1916, upon which 12,000 tons of ammunition there dumped went up, leaving a proposed offensive quite at inconvenience. These things do not, to speak strictly, accord well with a July evening.

A quieter process of destruction has called forth a special number of "Architecture"—namely, the abolition of Old Regent Street. Mr. J. D. Beresford, Mr. H. J. Birnstingl, and others sigh for the parting genius, and many illustrations complete the tribute and the condemnation. It is a fact to be gratefully observed that, if our age is not above barbarism in some of its activities, it is an age rich in veneration for the delicate consummations of past artists. While the finer sort of literature increases slowly and without much encouragement, such things as Mr. R. W. Chapman's edition of Jane Austen are brought into being, and are the opportunity for many proofs that subtle and vital criticism is yet growing greenly. Mr. Walkley in the "Edinburgh Review" adds to the number, and indeed an Austenian garland might be made from the blossoming inspired by Mr. Chapman's industry and affection. "Textual emendation," writes Dr. W. W. Greg in the "Library," "is the fine flower of criticism"—it is at any rate a sign of tranquillity and choice application.

The "Dublin Magazine," which has its prejudices, continues to be fresh and dexterous in the main. Mr. Thomas Bodkin's essay on J. B. Yeats is one of its good things, with the reproductions to aid its instructive ease. Here, again, is a case of to-day's occasional virtue, retrospective pleasure.

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THE following Lectures have been arranged:—

Two Public Lectures on "BRITAIN ON THE EVE OF THE RAILWAY AGE," by DR. J. H. CLAPHAM, Litt.D., C.B.E. (Lecturer in History and Economics, King's College, Cambridge), at the LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2), on THURSDAYS, FEBRUARY 21st and 28th, 1924, at 5 p.m. At the first Lecture the Chair will be taken by Sir William Acworth, K.C.S.I. (Member of the Council of the Royal Economic Society).

A Course of Three Lectures on "THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL," by PROFESSOR A. P. BRIGHAM (Professor of Geography in Colgate University, Hamilton, N.Y.), at the LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2), on FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22nd; TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26th; and FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 29th, at 5 p.m. At the first Lecture the Chair will be taken by SIR HALFORD J. MACKINDER, M.A. (Professor of Geography in the University).

Two Public Lectures on "CRIMINAL LAW," by SIR HARRY STEPHEN, LL.M., at UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON (Gower Street, W.C.1), on MONDAYS, FEBRUARY 25th and MARCH 3rd, at 5.30 p.m. The Chair at the first Lecture will be taken by THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE OF ENGLAND (The Right Hon. Lord Hewart), and at the second Lecture by the Hon. Mr. Justice Rowlatt, K.C.S.I.

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FINANCE AND INVESTMENT

BANK ADVANCES—OUR "INVISIBLE" EXPORTS—THE RISE IN OILS.

WITH the publication of the December figures the London Clearing Banks' monthly statements of weekly averages for the year 1923 are completed. The main items are given below:—

LONDON CLEARING BANKS.
(In £1,000,000's.)

1923.	Deposits	Bills.	Advances.	Investments.
Jan. ...	1,736	323	743	377
Feb. ...	1,687	289	753	368
March ...	1,639	253	758	352
April ...	1,648	252	762	346
May ...	1,650	265	760	344
June ...	1,679	273	764	349
July ...	1,680	279	764	356
Aug. ...	1,653	267	760	356
Sept. ...	1,651	263	761	355
Oct. ...	1,670	277	763	353
Nov. ...	1,671	271	767	355
Dec. ...	1,714	279	773	357

It will be seen that whilst deposits are down on the year there has been a marked recovery since the big drop in the early months. Down to March all the above items shared in the contraction with the exception of advances. These have grown with noteworthy persistence throughout the year. Whereas, however, in the first quarter they included a considerable volume of loans against securities (which were booming on the Stock Exchange), the probability is that as the year proceeded the expansion was more the outcome of increased accommodation to traders.

The ratio of advances to deposits in January was 42.8 per cent., and in December just over 45 per cent. In view of the fact that a 50 per cent. ratio of advances to deposits is in accordance with the customs and practice of bankers, the suggestion has been made that there is still scope for a 5 per cent. increase on the existing ratio before the banks need worry about having any more cash behind them at the Bank of England. It will be recalled that, in Mr. McKenna's view, an improvement in trade, if it is to be sustained and encouraged, will need more Bank cash; in other words, an increase in the Other Deposits at the Bank of England. But the argument that a proportion of 45 per cent. advances to deposits still leaves room for expansion overlooks the fact that although a 50 per cent. ratio used often to be aimed at before the war, it was not always adhered to, and some of the banks kept habitually below it.

Thus for all the banks to advance up to 50 per cent. a deliberate change of policy would be required on the part of some of them, whilst it must also be remembered that different banks serve different sections of the population, and a ratio of 50 per cent. in one case might not be wanted in all. There is, however, another and very important reason why the banks might not care to advance up to 50 per cent. of their deposits, and that is that advances in these days are very much less liquid than they used to be. A banker wants to lend and re-lend over short periods. His idea is to encourage a constant turnover and to discourage long-term loans, however fine the security may be. Of recent years, however, it has not been possible to maintain so high a degree of liquidity as before the war. The result has been that the banks have tended to reinforce their positions by strengthening the balance sheet elsewhere. This they do by retaining a certain regular proportion of Treasury Bills, which, being quickly convertible into cash at the Bank of England, constitute an admirable second line of defence. It is clear, therefore, that sufficient reason exists for doubting whether the bankers as a whole are able to finance improving trade without the creation of additional cash resources, which, as Mr. McKenna says, is not inflation, because it is merely issuing more credit against increased

production of commodities, and is, indeed, serving to maintain a stable price-level and thus to encourage trade further.

An estimate of our invisible exports in 1923 and of the resultant surplus available for overseas investment has just been published in the "Board of Trade Journal." The figures, which are well worth preserving, are as follows:—

	1907.	1910.	1913.	1920.	1922.	1923.
	In Million £.					
Excess Imp. of Merch'dise & Bullion	142	159	158	343	170	203
Net Income from Overseas Invest. ...	160	187	210	200	175	150
Net National Shipping Income ...	85	90	94	340	110	110
Commissions ...	25	25	25	40	30	36
Other Services ...	10	10	10	15	10	10
Total "Invisible Exports" on balance	280	312	339	595	325	300
Available for Investment Overseas ...	138	153	181	252	155	97

The amount of our invisible exports represented by income from shipping, commissions, and other services remains the same as for 1922. On the other hand, our income from overseas investments at £200 millions, though still about the same as for 1922, has for 1923 to suffer a reduction of £50 millions on account of payments to America instead of £25 millions as in the previous year. In consequence our total invisible exports come to £25 millions less at £300 millions, and the amount available for investment overseas is reduced to £97 millions. A sum of £136 millions was actually invested overseas in 1923, but, as the "Board of Trade Journal" points out, "probably the whole of the overseas issues on the London market was not taken up by British investors."

At the end of last week it was announced that the retail price of all the leading brands of motor spirit in this country had been advanced 4½d. per gallon. The effect of this was to awaken public interest in oil shares and bring in a number of buying orders to supplement the professional movement which had already started. The leading shares were quickly advanced to levels which showed substantial profits to purchasers even a few weeks ago, as will be seen from the following instances:—

1923.	Low.	Share.	Lowest since Jan. 2.	Recent level.
High. 90/7½	61/10½	... Shell Transport	75/-	4 27-32
48/6	15/1½	... Mexican Eagle	15/4½	20/-
36½	26 15-16	... Royal Dutch	33½	41
89/8	40/-	... Anglo-Persian	43/1½	3 1-16
5½	78/9	... Burmah	80/-	5 5-16
7 1-16	5½	... Lobitos	6 13-32	7 13-32

The rise in oil prices in America (Pennsylvania crude being now \$4.50 a barrel against \$2.60 in Nov.) has been brought about largely as the result of increasing demand, coupled with the curtailment of production which followed the excessive increase in supplies last year, when the output from the Californian and new mid-Continent wells caused a glut in the market. Prices fell so heavily that production was in time effectively checked, and consumption again began to overtake supply. The situation now certainly seems much better than it was. The future depends on the course of commercial events in America, where, judging from recent reports, activity is expected as the result of inflationary influences. Provided there is no falling off in production and employment in America, the demand for petrol may be quite sufficient to maintain and even increase prices. It will not be overlooked, however, that the natural tendency of rising prices is to encourage production, and that last autumn the United States output of oil reached the unprecedented total of 2,280,700 barrels a day. Though this was exceptional, it shows what sort of production can be expected under the stimulus of good prices.

L. D. W.

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AFTER EIGHTEEN MONTHS

In the Autumn of 1922 a million refugees of whom 600,000 at least were destitute, fled to Greek Territory.

In January, 1924, Mr. Henry Morgenthau, the Chairman of the League of Nations Refugee Settlement Commission, sent the following appeal to England.

"Despite the great efforts made by the Greek Government and people, a very large number of refugees are still without adequate shelter, few of them have warm clothes and most are inadequately fed. The bulk are in Western Thrace and Macedonia. Many are still in tents.

These tracts are now in the grip of Winter; the country is under snow; bitterly cold winds prevail, and the distress is intense.

The members of the Commission have ascertained these facts by personal inspection, and have had them verified by the reports of independent authorities.

In Salonica ten deaths were registered in one day, due solely to cold; numbers have also died elsewhere of cold and exposure.

The distress is the more severe, as the refugee population contains an unusually large number of women and children, who have no breadwinner, and as malarial fever prevails throughout these districts to an alarming extent.

The Commission estimate that the number in need of relief is not less than 500,000. This figure is supported by the statistics of the Greek Government."

After making an Urgent Appeal for Charitable Relief, the letter ends:

"The Commission, it should be explained, are precluded by their statutes from devoting any part of the sums at their disposal to charitable purposes; these funds are reserved strictly for the establishment of the refugees on a productive basis.

They feel, however, that it is incumbent upon them to place the verified facts before the charitable public in England and they are confident that the response will be immediate and generous."

We Earnestly Beg Your Personal Support.

Gifts of money, which are urgently required, should be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Imperial War Relief Fund, 80, General Buildings, Aldwych, W.C.2., which is co-operating with the Save the Children Fund and the Friends' Relief Committee in the All-British Appeal for the Near East.

Gifts of Clothing should be sent to the Fund, c/o New Hibernia Wharf, London Bridge, S.E.1.

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Expanding Business—Reduced Price—Increased Dividend—True Coal Conservation—Alleviating Unemployment—Harmonious Relations with Labour—Satisfactory Prospects.

The Annual Meeting of the proprietors of the Gas Light and Coke Company was held on February 1st. Mr. D. Milne Watson (the Governor) presided. The report and accounts were taken as read. The Chairman said:—

SATISFACTORY INCREASE IN BUSINESS.

With regard to the year that is just ended, the business of the Company has been most satisfactory, especially considering the state of depression in trade through which the country has been passing. The sale of gas shows an increase of 5 per cent., which is very gratifying, particularly when it is borne in mind that this comes upon the top of an increase of 8 per cent. in 1922.

When one reads the remarks that are sometimes made about the Gas Industry one might be tempted to think that its days were numbered, and that our heritage was about to fall into the hands of the electricians. I think you will agree, however, that there are no signs of decrepitude at the present moment in this great Company.

A STRIKING COMPARISON.

This Company alone produces in a year approximately as much energy (light, heat, and power) as is produced in the form of electricity by the whole of the Electrical Undertakings of Great Britain.

ELECTRIFICATION INVOLVES WASTE AND MISUSE OF COAL.

There is another point which I would like to make while dealing with this question, and that is that if this Company were to be swept out of existence and replaced by an Electrical Undertaking, that Undertaking would require to use at least three million tons of coal instead of the two millions we use. There is also this great advantage in favour of gas, that whereas that Electrical Undertaking would completely use up the three million tons of coal, this Company having treated the two million tons of coal and obtained the gas, would still have remaining 1,250,000 tons of coke and breeze, nineteen to twenty million gallons of tar, and a large quantity of ammonia. The coke is available for other industries and domestic purposes, and being a smokeless fuel helps very materially to improve the atmosphere of our city. The tar produces materials for dressing the surfaces of roads, dyestuffs, creosote for pickling timber, benzole spirit for motors, and many other things.

CONSERVING OUR COAL SUPPLIES.

From ammoniacal liquor is produced sulphate of ammonia, a nitrogenous fertilizer second to none in the world. The Company, therefore, together with the rest of the Industry, is not only serving its own day and generation well, but is safeguarding the future of the country by conserving its coal supply. Our coal deposits are by no means unlimited, and it is upon them that the continuation of our prosperity as a nation depends.

All these services performed by the Gas Industry are apt to be forgotten by the people who wax eloquent as to electricity and its future. We have no desire to deny the many and great uses for electricity, but we do not want the public to lose sight of the outstanding merits of our older but none the less youthful and vigorous industry. There is plenty of scope for us both.

REDUCTION IN PRICE.

Owing to the lower prices charged for gas during the year, the revenue has decreased by £1,300,000, but there has been an increase in the profit derived from residual products. Although we have used more coal and oil, we have saved under these headings £260,000, as we were very fortunate last year in buying our coal before the rise in price took place. There is also a reduced expenditure of £120,000 on repairs and maintenance of works and plant. The expenditure on the distribution of gas has increased somewhat, but this is all to the good as it indicates growth of business and care and attention to the wants of the consumers of gas.

EXPENDITURE ON EXPANSION.

With regard to Capital, we have spent £32,000 on land, chiefly for the purpose of building new Showrooms, which are urgently needed in several parts of London; there has also been a large expenditure on additional mains, meters

and stoves. This is due to expansion of business and is a sign of the ever-increasing appreciation of gas. It is all business-getting expenditure. Against this capital expenditure there is a credit for depreciation of stoves and the value of plant which has either been demolished or become obsolete. The net increase in capital expenditure for the year was £178,000.

INCREASED DIVIDEND.

The Directors declared a dividend in respect of the June half-year of £5 4s. per cent. on the Ordinary Stock, and they recommend to-day a dividend of £5 6s. 8d., and the placing of a sum of £11,000 to the Reserve Fund. After contributing £20,000 to the Redemption Fund, there will be a balance of £227,000 to be carried forward, as against a balance of £244,000 last year.

ALLEVIATING UNEMPLOYMENT.

In order to alleviate unemployment, the Company has undertaken, at the request of the Government, to expedite certain reconstructional work that would in the ordinary way have been carried out at a later date.

REVISION OF STANDARD PRICE.

The year has been a very important one for the Company. One of the outstanding events of the year has been the revision of the standard price. In August last the London County Council gave notice under the Gas Regulation Act of 1920 of an Application to the Board of Trade to hold an Inquiry for the purpose of revising the Company's standard price, which had been fixed in March, 1921, at 15.2d. at a time when the cost of raw materials, labour, &c., was much higher than at present. The Directors felt, and the Shareholders agreed last year, that it would have been unwise to pay dividends at rates which could be regarded as excessive considering that this is a public utility undertaking, and that the wiser policy was to pay a moderate dividend which could be maintained. Under these circumstances the Company could not resent the application of the London County Council for revision. The Inquiry was held in November. The London County Council suggested a new standard price of 10.8d., and the Company asked for 11.4d. The Board of Trade finally decided that the figure should be 11d.

HOW THE SLIDING SCALE WORKS.

As there seems to be some misconception as to what a standard price is, I may say that it is a price fixed by the Board of Trade at which the Company is entitled to pay a 4 per cent. dividend. This 4 per cent. dividend is increased or decreased by 2s. 8d. per cent. as the price of gas falls or rises from the standard price by each one-fifth of a penny per therm. Under the new standard price of 11d., the Company will be entitled to pay (with its present price of 8.6 pence) a dividend of 5½ per cent. This reduction in the standard price has nothing to do with the selling price, except in so far as it limits the dividend payable. When the Company's standard price was fixed at 15.2 pence per therm, the Company was selling gas at 14d., and when the revision took place in December last the Company was selling gas at 8.6 pence per therm, so that you will see that the revision of the standard price had nothing to do with the great reduction in the selling price from 14d. to 8.6d. It is in every way a good thing that this question of Revision is now settled so that all concerned will know exactly where they stand with regard to the price of gas and dividend.

PRICE OF GAS RELATIVELY LOW.

With reference to the price of gas it is right to point out that, whereas the cost of most of the raw materials is up nearly 100 per cent. as compared with pre-war cost, the increase in the price of gas to-day over 1914 is only about half this figure. The present cost of living is 77 per cent. above pre-war level, so the critics who are prone to say that the price of gas is too high are speaking without sufficient knowledge.

HARMONIOUS RELATIONS WITH LABOUR.

I am glad to say that during the past year our relations with labour have been most harmonious. Since 1921 the wages paid by this Company and the Industry generally have been governed by a sliding scale based upon the cost of living. This has worked very smoothly, and we have within the last week or two again come to an agreement with the men's representatives, which I believe will be mutually satisfactory. No agreement is of any use unless it has an element of mutual benefit.

THE VALUE OF CO-PARTNERSHIP.

As you are aware, we have a co-partnership scheme the basis of which is the payment to our employees of a bonus at a rate equal to that of the dividend on the Ordinary Stock of the Company, and this scheme has produced a genuine feeling of mutual interest amongst the Company's workers. A similar scheme might with advantage be adopted by many other industries, and would do much to bring about an understanding between employers and employed, and help practically towards the realization of the fact that capital is absolutely essential to industry and is thus of equal importance to employers and employed. When the workers are themselves holders of Capital, they are much more likely to be convinced of its utility than if they have no invested capital. The Co-partners now hold approximately £450,000 Ordinary Stock in the Company.

I mentioned a year ago that we were just starting a contributory Pension Fund for our workmen, and I am justified in saying after twelve months of working that it has been an unqualified success, and is much appreciated by all.

ENDOWMENT OF RESEARCH.

The Directors have instituted a Gas Light and Coke Company Fellowship at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, South Kensington, to enable research work to be carried out by a post-graduate. It has always been my belief that there should be as close a relationship as possible between science and business.

THE HOME DYE INDUSTRY.

I hope there will be no attempt to repeal the Dyestuffs (Import Regulation) Act, passed in 1920. At the outbreak of war the Germans had practically got a monopoly of the manufacture of all dyestuffs and that branch of the Chemical Industry to the great disadvantage of this country. It is quite impossible for this country to build up a Dye Industry without some measure of protection, at all events during the first years. A great deal has been done already under this Act to make Great Britain independent of foreign supplies, but much remains to be done. This Company has taken its share in this work, and has spent considerable sums of money relying upon this Act. If it were to be repealed foreign competition would be such as to make it unprofitable to make dye materials in this country, to our great detriment and the additional disadvantage of throwing a great number of men out of work.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE EXHIBITION.

The British Empire Exhibition will be opened at Wembley in April, and the Gas Industry felt that it should do something worthy of the Exhibition and of itself on this occasion. The Industry is arranging a suitable exhibit, and this Company is contributing its share in providing money for this purpose. The main object of the British Empire Gas Exhibit will be to show the public the domestic and industrial applications for gas, and educate them in all the ways in which gas can serve in the house and in business. I hope that those of you who visit Wembley will not omit to visit the Gas Exhibit in the Palace of Industry.

RECORD OUTPUTS.

The sale of gas for the year was not only the largest on record, but we had a record day's output. On November 26th we sent out nearly 157 million cubic feet of gas, and we have frequently during this winter touched 150 millions in a day. We had an increase during the year of 11,000 consumers, and 67,000 gas stoves sold and let on hire.

I would like to say a word in praise of all those who work in the Company. No one could wish to have a more loyal and hardworking body devoting itself most heartily and energetically to its work. This spirit is a good augury for the future.

The Report and Accounts were adopted.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT AND WANTED.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—The Senate invite applications for the University Chair of Education, tenable at King's College. Salary, £800 a year. Applications (12 copies) must be received not later than first post on February 28th, 1924, by the Academic Registrar, University of London, South Kensington, S.W. 7, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

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is starving?

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